

INTRODUCTORY

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101 first-hand knowledge of them. On the coast they are classed with
197 Nyakyusa and Ngonde as *Sokile*, a nickname derived from the traditional Nyakyusa greeting.

128 This book is concerned with the Nyakyusa.¹ What it contains is true in general terms for the people of Ngonde, but how far it is applicable to the smaller groups cited we are not certain. The Ndali, Sukwa, and Penja, are said to have long had an age-village organization; and Henga, Nyika and Kisi living intermingled with Ngonde and Nyakyusa have adopted it; but of the customs of the Wenya and Lambya we know little. Dr. Kerr Cross and Monteith Fotheringham, who travelled extensively in the area before 1890, reported that the Ndali and Sukwa (of Misuku) were very similar to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, but that the Lambya were different, practising shifting *citimene* cultivation, and living in stockaded villages.²

73 According to their own traditions the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs (who trace descent from common ancestors) came ten generations ago from Kinga country, on the Livingstone mountains, and found the Rungwe and North Nyasa country already occupied. They established themselves as chiefs and have since been increasing the area of their occupation. The Kinga also affirm that their chiefs are related to those of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, and they join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to common ancestors at Lubaga and LiKya (see Map III), but the Kinga culture is quite distinct from that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde; we stayed long enough in Kinga country to convince ourselves that the Kinga live in kinship villages and not in age-villages, and that they differ from the Nyakyusa in many other respects.

177 There seems little doubt that the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people have been expanding in an area not uninhabited, but sparsely
167 inhabited, and that the assimilation of the Penja and other groups now proceeding is no new phenomenon, but part of a process which has long been going on. Within recent years over 2,000

[11] ¹ The Nyakyusa as here defined numbered 199,044 in Rungwe district at the 1931 census, and 3,732 outside the district; the Ndali 22,834, the Lambya (within Rungwe district, and not including those in Nyassaland) 12,403, and the Kisi (in Njombe district) 2,115. *Tanganyika Territory, Census of the Native Population, 1931*.

² D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyasa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika, *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 216; L. M. Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyassaland* (1891), pp. 129-33. Nyonde was a Lambya chief, cf. Godfrey Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

631 recognized over 100 chiefdoms, mustering anything from 100 to 3,000 adult men apiece.

769 Although no centralized political authority existed before the
631 German occupation, certain groups of chiefdoms joined in common rituals directed to common ancestors. We traced four such centres of worship among the Nyakyusa; the most important being Lubaga, in the middle of the valley, where Kinga priests (from the top of the Livingstone mountains) join with many Nyakyusa chiefdoms in sacrifice to Lwembe, who is claimed as the ancestor both of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper, and of the Kinga. At LiKyalala, on the Lake-shore plain, Kinga also join in sacrifice with the surrounding Nyakyusa chiefdoms. In Ngonde the chief connected with a similar centre of worship, Mbande, developed far-reaching secular as well as religious powers; and by the time the Europeans arrived he was established as a paramount chief with the title of the Kyungu. This development was directly connected with the fact that Ngonde traded with the outside world, and that their Kyungu, through his control of ivory, was able also to control the guns and cloth which came into the country:¹ the Nyakyusa, remaining isolated, remained politically disunited.

[439] Besides sacrificing to a distant ancestor in company with the representatives of a large group of chiefdoms, two or more chiefs who are neighbours participate in a sacrifice at the grove in which their common father, or grandfather, is buried. Thus common worship links both large groups of chiefdoms, whose chiefs are more or less distantly related, and small groups of contiguous chiefdoms whose chiefs are close kinsmen. The sacrifices made are to the chiefs of immediately preceding generations, and to certain great heroes of the distant past, such as Lwembe and Kyalala.

769 All these sacrifices are believed to bring rain and fertility, for
789 the well-being of each chiefdom is thought to be bound up with the health of the chief and the goodwill of his ancestors.

173 The Nyakyusa are all agreed that their chiefs, *abanyafyale*, are
622 'strangers' who came down from the Livingstone mountains
563 eight or ten generations ago, and found the valley already occupied by people who had no knowledge of fire, but ate their food raw. The chiefs brought fire with them—some say, cattle also;

¹ Godfrey Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 39-48.

INTRODUCTORY

13

and by virtue of this great benefit were accepted as chiefs. Such is the myth (*vide infra*, p. 26). It is remembered that the chiefs of different groups such as the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Lugulu, and the Saku arrived at different times, but of the proportion of the immigrants to the former occupants, and of the proportion of men to women in the invading groups, we learnt nothing. Some suggest that the chiefs were lighter in colour than the previous inhabitants of the valley,¹ and the term *abatitu*, 'black people', is used for commoners as contrasted with chiefs. But chiefs intermarry freely with commoners and there is no observable difference in physical type between them and their people to-day. The Nyakyusa are without a clan system, and though kinship with a chief may be remembered for three (or perhaps even four) generations, the body of 'kinsmen of the chief' is not defined as it is in tribes which have a 'royal clan' like the Bemba or Pondo. Moreover, among the Nyakyusa the chief's advisers are never his kinsmen, but commoners. Sons or grandsons of a chief are ineligible as village headmen, who are the counsellors of the chief, and who had in the past very great control over him. The contrast is made between chiefs, *abanyafyale*, on the one hand, and commoners, *amafumu*, on the other, and the leaders of villages, chosen each generation by their predecessors (*vide infra*, p. 23), are the *amafumu par excellence*.² Words from this *-fumu* root mean 'chief' in various central Bantu languages (Bemba, Tumbuka, Nyanja); and it is tempting to suppose that the *amafumu* were the old chiefs conquered by the invading *abanyafyale*, but that is only a supposition. The important point for the contemporary social structure is that the village leaders are *commoners*; that their position is not hereditary, since they are selected afresh each generation; and that formerly they had very great power over the chief. This power has diminished considerably with the development of European administration. The Nyakyusa, indeed, were astounded to be told that the British

¹ cf. Godfrey Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 10 (footnote).

² For this reason *ulifumu* was translated by Godfrey Wilson as 'great commoner', in 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936), and other papers, but this translation has considerable difficulties, and I have preferred to translate *ulifumu* as 'village headman' in the contexts in which it means the leader of the village, and 'commoner' or 'villager' in other contexts. It must be clearly understood that 'village headman' as used in this book means something quite different from 'headman' as used by the Administration (*vide infra*, p. 258).

764 according to lineage custom. In the round and oval graves the body is placed in the cave in a sitting position; in the oblong graves lying at full length on one arm; but in both the dead man is set to face the direction from which he and his people have traditionally come. The bulk of the Nyakyusa say that they came from the east, eight or ten generations ago, down the Livingstone Mountains into their present country; and it is to the east that they face in death. Those in the north of the district, whose local name is Kukwe, face in death towards their most recent centre of dispersion near Rungwe Mountain, although they have traditions going farther back to a migration from the Livingstone Mountains through the present Sangu country.

• [173] Digging a grave is traditionally a dangerous activity, but nowadays it is no longer so much feared as it used to be. Formerly only mature men helped to dig a grave and they were given a whole leg of the burial meat to eat by themselves. Nowadays young men—often Christians—do it.

Before the burial the body is carried in procession round the homestead. The chief mourners surround it wailing, and the dead man's cattle are driven in front. 'We do this to honour the dead man.' Then one of the cattle of the lineage is taken 'to look into the grave'. Two or three people get down into the grave to receive and bury the body. In the case of a man, his chief wife, his sister, and a male kinsman or village neighbour usually bury him. These three line the cave with mats and cloths which are passed down to them; then the body, previously washed and shaved¹ and now wrapped in cloths, is handed down, and they put it in position in the cave together with a few personal possessions such as a pipe, an eating-pot, a little calabash of ointment, and one of beer; nowadays also a looking-glass and perhaps a pencil and a cup. 'He goes with them to the place of the shades.' A woman is given bark-cloth belts and rouge, and a winnowing basket in place of the pipe and pot. They take off the strings of such utensils as are normally hung up. 'If the strings are left on the utensils will still be hanging up and he will be looking for them.' More cloths and mats are then put in with the body, and the cave is closed either with a stiff mat or with the door of the dead man's house, in accordance with local custom. Often there are hot disputes be-

[184] ¹ The Kukwe wash the body just before death, the Nyakyusa and Penja after. The Kukwe fear lest their children should die of 'water in the stomach' if they wash a corpse.

20 The Land & the People

133 and warlike tribe, the latter until recently their
101 oppressed subjects and slaves.

- 173 The earliest traditions go back to a time when the
Konde dwelt in Malongo, in the area now known as
[773] Mahenge. There their god Ngeketo, roused to wrath
by three attempts to destroy him, abandoned them,
and is now the God of the white men. Whether on
this account, or for some other reason, a great migra-
tion brought them to the country north of the
Songwe River, where they settled down, no doubt
conquering older inhabitants. At some unknown
time, but before the Angoni reached so far north in
their great march from Zululand, the Sango, neigh-
bours of the Konde northwards, were driven out of
their homes by intertribal warfare. They broke
down over the intervening mountains, and overcame
the unwarlike Konde, among whom they settled down
as chiefs, retaining until now the tradition of their
Sango ancestry. Whether at the same or another
time, the Kinga, probably for the same reason—
pressure from behind—swarmed down the steep
mountain passes, and established themselves in the
Nserya region.

One of the leading Kinga chiefs was Mwangonde,
who, under the name of Chungu, occupied land at
Kabari, near the Mwakeleli Mission Station. His
son, Kyabara Chungu, setting out with an armed
force in search of more fertile garden land, met with
varying fortunes, until he was finally obliged to cross
the Songwe into what later became Nyasaland. In
this region Chungu seems to have made easy con-

The Land & the People 21

quests. He passed through the mountain region north and west of Karonga, receiving the submission of the chiefs as he went; thence he descended into the plain at Karonga, finally establishing himself at Mpande, where his descendants still live. 173

The legends which have gathered around the person of Chungu reveal him as a man of impressive personality. One legend states that having established himself at Karonga, he cast longing eyes on the regions on the other side of Lake Nyasa. With a great following he went down to the lake, smote the water with his sceptre, and crossed on dry land. Receiving the submission of the people, he returned as he went; followed later, but in canoes, by a great multitude of people, who wished to settle under the shadow of so great a chief. The European attitude towards this event is shared by native Christians, but quite intelligent pagans meet scepticism, quietly and gravely, with the statement that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God." The incident, or whatever event it represents in its present form, can only be satisfactorily accounted for by regarding it as what the Higher Critics call a "later accretion"; for the Angoni, with their own story of a similar crossing of the Zambesi, had not yet arrived, the Arabs were still in the distance, and direct Christian influence did not begin for many years afterwards. 177

It is needless to give in detail the history of his successors. One lost much land to rival chiefs; another was deposed because he could not give rain in a time of drought. The country fell into confusion. 173

22 The Land & the People

- 173 Prophets arose who foretold the coming of the Angoni and the Arabs to work havoc on land and people. Then from the lake would come the strange white man who would overcome Angoni and Arab, and give peace to the land. To this race the people were directed to submit themselves when they came. So deep and sure would the peace be, that men would go armed only with sticks, all need for spear and shield having passed away.

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177 But the peace was still in the future. Arab and Angoni came and fulfilled their destiny. The Henga or Kamanga people, fleeing before the latter, were received by the Konde, and were at first friendly to their hosts, but later, when the Arabs arrived as traders and slavers, made an alliance with them against the harassed Konde. Into this confusion entered, very dramatically, the white man, of whose coming the natives give graphic accounts. The approach of the *Ilala*, the tiny steamer of the Livingstonia Mission, then operating from Cape Maclear, far to the south, struck the people with terror. "It is God," they said, "He walks on the water." As the little vessel drew near the land, the people fled into the bush. A white man landed. A few strong-hearted natives ventured to approach, and saw his white skin. "It is surely God," they said, "He has come to us in the likeness of men." When he ate some bananas in their presence, they said, "No, not God, but a friend of His."

175 In 1887 the African Lakes Corporation of Glasgow

CHAPTER XXV

The Brave Days of Old

LIKE the Romans and Greeks, and like many ¹⁷³ peoples at an elementary stage of civilization, the Konde place their great days in the past. It is, perhaps, a little strange that this should be so; for there can be no doubt that the presence of the white man has stirred the African everywhere to the thought of a new day for his race. But they are at the same time conscious that great things were done in the past, and among the demands made upon me by natives whom I have consulted, and who have helped me with this book, there is none more insistent than that I should include the portentous happenings of an older day.

Old and middle-aged men speak gleefully of the ¹⁷⁷ days of their youth; of the great deeds they did when ⁸⁶⁸ they were boys; how they trapped more skilfully, caught bigger fish, ran faster, leaped higher than the young men of to-day. And the deterioration, they assert very emphatically, is due to the presence of the white man. Not that the latter discourages sport; on the contrary he spurs it on; but in his own way, and that is not the Konde way. The white man's way is to give prizes to the winner; the Konde

304 The Brave Days of Old

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868 way is to give the lash to the duffers ; and they claim that theirs is the more effective method of bringing all up to a high standard. But thrash the ninny to-day, and he is off to the Administrative Officer to lodge his complaint, which the latter must inquire into. And hence much deterioration.

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773 But these are not the facts of which they wish a permanent record to be made. There are other things ; things which the pagan native profoundly believes, and which Christians also believe and take pride in, though they think that the missionary will object to their holding what he probably calls silly ideas. These stories include most of the typical tales of olden times : the hero-warrior, the defier of tyrants, the mighty medicine man, the great prophet, the man who has obtained lordship over Nature in some form, and the man who controls the spirits. All these, and many more, are included among the Konde tales, and I do not place them among folk tales, for the people regard them quite differently. A folk tale is to-day, whatever it may have been in the past, either a mere diversion to pass away an idle moment, or a moral for children, or a warning for adolescents. The tales which I am thinking of are, in the native mind, records of facts, facts which they believe to be no longer achievable, but indubitably fact in the past ; and no study of the native mind can be complete which does not take this into account.

I. The hero-warrior. Chungu, in his early wanderings in search of a home, came near the hill Mphande, the seat of the Simbove rulers of that day.

The Brave Days of Old 305

Like the English King Alfred, he determined to be his own intelligence department, and, scouting around for the best point of attack, he came upon a woman working alone in the fields, gathering *makuka*, heaps of grass to be burned before the hoeing. 173•
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"Who," he asked the woman, "are the dwellers on that hill?"

"Are you a stranger here," she replied, "that you do not know that that is the hill of the Simbove?"

"I am going there now," said Chungu; "if they pursue me I will come to you, and you shall hide me in the grass heap. If they ask for me you shall say that you know nothing, and if they put you to the poison test, you will be acquitted."

Setting out again, Chungu crept up the stronghold of which he was soon to be master; but he was observed, and presently came rushing back to claim the woman's help. Scarce was the grass well over him ere his enemies broke in with threatening spears, demanding the immediate surrender of the spy. The woman boldly kept her secret, and the poison test having acquitted her, the Simbove set fire to the grass heap by which they were standing, and in which Chungu lay concealed, and went on in their pursuit. How Chungu escaped from the fire must be left to conjecture, but one remembers that he was "the man who speaks with God."

He now brought up a herd of elephants, which when the Simbove saw, they crowded out with spears to the kill; and the invading chief drove the elephants far off, so that all the men of warrior age were drawn away

306 The Brave Days of Old

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713 from the defence. Next he brought up a flock of guinea-fowl, and all the old and the feeble, and the women and children, went out after them, only to be drawn away as the men were. Chungu now gave the signal to his warriors, who rushed upon the place, seized it without opposition, and beat the great drum to apprise the whole land that a new lord ruled at Mphande.

II. The defier of tyrants. Long ago there was a chief called Mwambagi. When he killed an ox, he called up all his people, bidding them cut up the animal, and cook the feast in great pots. But when all was ready, he ordered them off to their homes, and sat down to devour the food with his favourites, while the hungry people, with the savour of the well-cooked feast in their nostrils, went sadly to their homes. Next day the tyrant went round among his people.

"I hope you enjoyed the feast yesterday," he leered.

"O yes, sir," they answered, "it was very good indeed."

But there was one man, Kasanda by name, who refused to be humbugged any longer; and when one day, after the people had suffered this grievous disappointment, the chief came round to receive their hungry and disgusted plaudits, the trouble began.

"Did you enjoy the feast yesterday," demanded the chief.

"What feast?" boldly asked Kasanda. "When did you give us a feast?"

"I feasted you yesterday," said the angry tyrant.

"You may have feasted others," was the reply, "but I came back hungry."

The Brave Days of Old 307

The enraged bully ordered his men to arrest and bind the rebel, and throw him over a precipice called "Ikisyo." But as he was falling over, Kasanda found that the ropes that bound him untied of their own accord; and as he rolled downwards, the precipice became a gently sloping descent, over which he fell without harm. The chief was amazed.

"How has he escaped?" he anxiously asked his attendants. But they merely shrugged their shoulders.

"Call to him," said the chief, "and tell him that I have erred."

So Kasanda, unharmed by his adventure, walked up the sloping ascent, which had been a precipice, and which became a precipice again as soon as he reached the top, where the chief and his attendants awaited him. To settle the quarrel, the chief gave his daughter to Kasanda, along with four cows, and no more demanded praise for good deeds not done. "And all the people praised Kasanda, saying, 'Thank you.' Such was the cruelty of Mwambagi, and such the courage of Kasanda."

III. The people take a pride in the great doctors of the past; for it is the doctors, and not the prophets, who are the miracle workers. The Hebrew prophets sometimes appeared to control Nature, but in all cases it was the act of God, who intervened at the prayer of the prophet. In the Konde stories the doctor does not pray for Divine intervention, nor are his acts regarded as anything but the expression of his own powers.

There were two great doctors, Kasakenye and

308 The Brave Days of Old

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773 Gwasa, of equal skill, and deadly rivals in their art. One day at a beer feast, a dispute arose, in the presence of the two, as to which of them was the greater, and a challenge was issued. Gwasa made medicine, and called upon the people to observe the result. Presently the sun began to sink towards the earth, and the people cried out in terror; but at a sign from Gwasa it retreated again, and resumed its accustomed place in the heavens. It was now Kasekenye's turn. Plucking a shrub from the ground, he revealed to the astonished gaze of the people a beautiful village of the underworld, men going about, or lying in the sun, cattle feeding in the meadows, trees and rivers, hills and valleys, just as the fathers had told them of the life of the underworld. He replaced the shrub, and the vision vanished. And no man could tell which of these two wonders was the greater, that of Gwasa, or that of Kasekenye.

But trouble came upon the community. The cattle became thin, sorcerers abounded, and evil fell upon all the people; and the chief called upon the two doctors for help. Each sprinkled the ground with his chosen medicine; but Kasekenye, hoping to steal a march upon his rival, sprinkled another medicine by night. But he was punished. His body broke out into sores, and he was fain to call in his rival to cure him, and the superiority of Gwasa was acknowledged. But one minor chief was not satisfied. He called upon Gwasa to come and cure him of a pretended illness. The angry doctor, immediately perceiving the trap, threw his medicine bag against the wall of his patient's

The Brave Days of Old 309

house, where it stuck, and he stalked wrathfully off. 173 ●
The gift of an ox calmed his wounded spirit, and he 773
removed the medicine bag from the wall. "Then
did all men know that Gwasa was a great doctor."

IV. Occasionally others besides doctors controlled aspects of Nature. Ntindi was a great prophet, without whose advice his chief would do nothing. If he told the chief to pray, the people were called, and the sacrifices offered. If he foretold smallpox, nothing could avert it, except prayer and repentance. When he foretold war, the people got ready for fight or flight as he advised. He was unlike all other men. Biting ants left him alone; bees never stung him; snakes cleared from his path. Every one admired him. From birth to death his hair was never cut, and no word of his ever fell to the ground. To this day the people protect their houses from biting ants by sprinkling earth from his grave all around, and no ant will pass that sacred barrier, for Ntindi is their lord.

Such stories are very numerous. How did they 000
arise? It may be a vain inquiry; but at any rate they are more than mere words; they witness to something lying deep in the native mind. Were the people, or some of them, convinced that life is bigger potentially than it is in actual fact? and did they invent these stories to satisfy a craving for redemption from the commonplace? Or did they believe that there is power available for certain persons, which is denied to common men? Perhaps uncommon incidents did occur, which were worked up into their present form by unconscious literary genius. It may

NORTH NYASA REGION

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175 independent chiefs have been grouped into eleven court districts, with one chief as
631 President of the Native Court in each. These chiefs, with two presidents of the Ndali and Lambiya courts, are federated, and possess one Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury between them.¹

The following is a summary of the history of the Ngondo, south of the Songwe river:

173 Ngondo tradition records that about 200 years ago a chief of the Kings, Ngolove, had two grandsons, Luembe (from whom descended the Nyakyusa) and Chawara (from whom came the Ngonde, the Iwa, and the Nyanwanga).² Chawara left Ukings and wandered west and south as far as Nkamanga, the capital of the Tumbuka country, returning thence to capture Mbande from Sinhowa, the indigenous chief.³ After this the local chiefs accepted him as their overlord, and he confirmed their status with public gifts of cloth, much as Mlweka had done with the Tumbuka. There is little information about these earlier inhabitants, but it seems likely that they were similar to the Tumbuka, before the latter were conquered by Mlweka.⁴ There is an old tradition that Mlweka and Chawara knew each other in their former home, and that their meeting at Nkamanga was as one between equals, at which the boundaries between their territories were formally arranged. According to Tonga tradition certain details of the accompanying ritual and the fact of his prior arrival show Mlweka to have been recognized by Chawara as a higher authority, but this interpretation together with the circumstantial evidence are repudiated by the Ngondo tradition.⁵

175 Opinions differ as to the actual date of the arrival of the first Ngondo ruler, Kyungu. He came accompanied by five leading men, and was accepted as overlord by the local chiefs. The latter, with the immigrants, formed a clan of hereditary nobles, amakandala, who divided into two groups according to whether they lived at Mbande (the nobles of Ngondo?) or whether they lived at a distance (territorial nobles).⁶ Later immigrants joined one or the other group. These nobles ruled the country. The Kyungus, enriched by the ivory trade, were credited with divine powers, and lived in strict religious seclusion. Most of their male children were killed at birth by the nobles of Ngondo, and if they themselves fell sick they were killed. A constitutional change took place after the accession of the tenth Kyungu, Mwangunde: the killing of the sons of the Kyungu was stopped, and such was the prestige of the royal blood that they began to displace the territorial nobles as rulers. The sons of the Kyungu became hereditary chiefs, amang'ala, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided the territory between them as the Nyakyusa do. Each territorial noble was succeeded by only one heir. The effect of this branching of new chiefdoms was to create a number of hierarchies of small chiefdoms under one head, the great chief.⁷ The relation of these political units to each other, and to the central authority at Mbande, will be considered in the section on Social Organization.

When the Ngoni first attacked the Ngondo, Mwangunde was the first Kyungu

¹ Wilson, *l.c.* 1928, pp. 12-13, gives seven districts, but the number has been increased.

² Ibid., *l.c.* 1928, p. 2; Macdonald, 1929, pp. 20-21; Young, *T. C.*, *l.c.* 1929, p. 26.

³ Macdonald, 1929, pp. 20-21.

⁴ Young, *T. C.*, *l.c.* 1929, pp. 26-27.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 27-28; Young also believes that they originally came from the Shona (Ibid., *l.c.* 1929, p. 25).

⁶ Wilson's terminology.

⁷ Wilson, *l.c.* 1928, p. 2; Macdonald, 1929, pp. 22-23.

It is unusual for a sociologist to find such a simple problem for analysis as this and it was not long before the answer was plain. The Nyskyusa, until a few decades before the coming of the Europeans, had been largely isolated from any vigorous external contacts; Ngonde, on the other hand, had been effectively related to the outside world for generations. The Nyskyusa actually possessed in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lobaga, a line of spiritual paramounts or high priests, whose religious functions were remarkably similar to those of the Kyungus in Ngonde; but, poor and isolated as they were, they had never developed any secular paramountcy at all. The reasons for the greater elaboration of the traditional political system of Ngonde were to be found above all in the ivory trade and in the constant influx of immigrant groups.

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And it further became clear that the prestige which the present Kyungus enjoys in the changed conditions to-day is due in large part to his having followed the mercantile traditions of his predecessors, mastered the business methods of the Scots, made a fortune, and then kept up his position out of his own private means.

2. THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE (TO 1875).

In studying the present constitution of Ngonde and the profound changes now taking place in it, we cannot find any point of time at which the process of change began. In its present radical form social change in Ngonde arises from the ferment of a host of new social conditions imported by European missionaries, traders and Government officials. But the Arabs also brought change to Ngonde and before the Arabs the Nguni, while before the coming of the Nguni there is evidence to suggest that changes had arisen, on more than one occasion, in the normal behaviour of the men of Ngonde which were stimulated, not by any new contacts with the outside world, but simply by accidents of their own internal history. Social change in Ngonde, as far as we can see, has always been going on.

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In this section the political history of Ngonde is described in outline from the its beginnings to the coming of the Europeans in 1875, in so far as it can be recovered from the oral tradition. In later sections a systematic analysis is attempted, first of the constitution of Ngonde just prior to that date, and then of the changes in it which have since taken place.

173

(a) THE EARLY KYUNGUS.

It is generally agreed that the ancestors of the Kyungus, the present hereditary chiefs of Ngonde, came from the Livingstone Mountains in [The dissimilarity between the Ngonde and the Nyskyusa political system. — Analysis]

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173 the north east; that they passed westwards near Rungwe Mountain and
643 out into "the country of the Bisa," only to turn eastwards again to the
Songwe River. Then they journeyed southwards through the hills to
the present Kamanga and finally turned back to Mbande.

In the Livingstone Mountains, the country of the Kings, the first name which the men of Ngonde remember is that of Ngulube;¹ and from him not only the Kyungus but also the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and of the Kings are said to be descended. While on his tortuous journey from the Livingstone Mountains to Mbande the Kyungu is said to have started out with three brothers and a sister, and to have left them all behind at different places. One brother founded a line of Inamwanga chiefs, another of Iba chiefs, while the third, Mwenembaku, together with their sister, followed the Kyungu to the Lambys near the upper Songwe and stayed there. Mwenembaku had a son Kameme and his sister had a son Nyondo, and still to-day there is rivalry between their two houses for the leadership of this group of Lambys.

On reaching Mbande the Kyungu found it already occupied by Simbobwe.² "Simbobwe built on Mbande before the Kyungu; he was a clever hunter. He found that elephants were very plentiful here and so built on Mbande. He was a Fipa by birth and had come from the north." Then the Kyungu drove Simbobwe from Mbande back to the land of the Fipa and captured a great deal of ivory. The usual version of this story is full of miraculous incident, telling, first, how he hid from Simbobwe in a tiny pile of grass and, then, how he took Mbande without a blow by creating elephants, buffaloes and guinea-fowl for Simbobwe and his people to hunt, and climbing the hill when it was deserted. Once on top he beat his drum and the men of Simbobwe heard it and fled. Miraculous power and the possession of ivory—

¹ One of our best informants in history, the late Reuben Mweniambho, took the legend further back still: "He came from the country of the Kings, yes, but originally he came from the north; his body was pale and he came to the land of the Kings and took it; and men said 'ha! a pig!' (apuhle) because his body was pale. He spoke the language of the Abalungwe (Arab or half-Arab traders). Thus they gave him the name Ngulube (or pig) and then married in Kings country and begot Lyambelo."

² "The sacred graves of the old Kyungus there used to be iron implemented as unusual pattern—knives, razors, and spears. The Kyungu brought them with him from the north when he first came. I have seen them myself . . . but now the herd boys have stolen them all. And on the hill Mbande I have seen very old pottery." And he also maintained, as we shall see, that the early Kyungus used to trade ivory northwards from Ngonde. And Reuben Mweniambho said that the first Kyungu brought cloth with him when he came. Thus, though proof is impossible, there is a suggestion in the legends of Ngonde that the chiefs in this part of the world are direct descendants of early Arab or half-Arab traders from the East African coast.

³ The similarity of this name to "Zimbabwe" appears to be accidental.

already in the earliest legends are reflected the twin sources of the Kyungu's supremacy, for, as we shall see, they combined divine kingship with wholesale ivory trading. 173
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The Kyungu who took Mbande was not alone, he brought with him into Ngunde five leading men whose names are still borne by their descendants: Katenga, Mulwa, Kyumba, Mboma and Ngui. Nor did he find the country empty; besides Simbabwe, who was himself a recent immigrant, there were Muryani, Mwenendeka, Mwenekaluma, Mwenekindile, Mwenifumbo and others; they all had men of their own, and, with the exception of Simbabwe who fled, they all accepted the Kyungu as their overlord. To this day some of their names also survive in Ngunde. The Kyungu, according to the late Mwenifumbo,¹ brought cloth with him and used it to consolidate his position: "Then the Kyungu gave headcloths to us nobles, to Mwenekaluma, Mwenifumbo and the others; and he said to us: 'You are the priests, you the indigenous owners of the land, do you pray for me that I, the chief, may sleep in peace.'"

I make no attempt here to date the arrival of the Kyungu in Ngunde, for to do so would require a careful collation of this tradition with those of neighbouring tribes. The present Kyungu is said to be about the eighteenth of that title in Ngunde, but, as the reigns of many Kyungus were very short and as some early names have probably been forgotten, this fact alone tells us little.

For the period from the coming of the first Kyungu to the birth of Mwangunde (who was about the tenth Kyungu in Ngunde) the legends are scanty and vague; but the following facts are generally attested by them. The leading men among the Kyungu's followers, together with the rulers of the indigenous population, came to form a class of hereditary nobles (*omakenkole*), within which, as we shall see, two groups were distinguished, those who lived near Kyungu at Mbande and those who did not. Important immigrants with followers of their own continued to enter Ngunde after the coming of the Kyungu and they also became hereditary nobles, either in the one group or in the other. The Kyungus, though credited with divine powers and enriched by the ivory trade, had but limited powers of secular action; they lived a life of religious seclusion, while the nobles ruled the country. Most of the male children of the Kyungu were killed at birth, and they themselves were killed when they fell sick, but their sickness should spread magically among their people. 173
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These early Kyungus lived with their wives on the top of the hill Mbande, inside a great enclosure. Near them, some on Mbande, some out, lived a group of nobles. This group, which is specifically referred

¹ Kahanu Mwenifumbo. He has died since we left Ngunde.

173 to as "the nobles of Ngonde" (*Anangonde*) included, firstly, the
 643 successors of those five leading men whom the first Kyungu brought with
 565 him¹, secondly the successors of two of the indigenous rulers whom the
 Kyungu had found in the country and who happened to live near
 Mbande² and, thirdly, seven others who joined the group later.³ These
 fourteen nobles lived at Mbande, each with a group of followers and
 exercised the central power at the Kyungu's command, or at least in his
 name. The names of all fourteen are still borne as hereditary titles by
 their successors in Ngonde to-day and, with two exceptions,⁴ all their
 successors still rank as nobles of Ngonde.

Besides the nobles of Ngonde near Mbande there were the other
 nobles "who lived at a distance," some in the plain, some in the hills.
 In the language of Ngonde they are simply referred to by the general
 term "nobles" (*amakhulu*) but, in order to distinguish them from the
 nobles of Ngonde, I shall here call them "territorial nobles."

They consisted, firstly, of those indigenous rulers whom the first
 Kyungu found in Ngonde but who did not happen to live near Mbande,
 and, secondly, of important immigrants who constantly arrived in
 Ngonde with followers of their own and were given land. Some of these
 immigrants came from the east across the lake, others from the west,
 from what is now Northern Rhodesia. The present Kyungu gave us
 a list of thirty-seven families of territorial nobles, of whom only five or six
 were found in Ngonde by the first Kyungu, the remainder having entered
 afterwards. How many of these thirty odd immigrants came during
 the period of the early Kyungus and how many later we do not know.

In the middle period of Ngonde's history, as we shall see, two
 tendencies are manifest: the Kyungus begin to emerge from their religious
 seclusion and slightly to increase their secular power at the expense of
 the nobles of Ngonde, while the "sons of the Kyungu" increase in
 numbers, set up hereditary chiefdoms under him and gradually oust the
 territorial nobles from the Ngonde plain. But in this early period the
 nobles were the only effective rulers. At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde

¹ Kungu, Mbeu, Kyungu, Mbeu and Ngai.

² Mbeu and Mbeu.

³ Mbeu and Kyungu were both of the same line as Mbeu but attained
 prominence later as heads of junior branches of it and both became nobles of
 Ngonde. And two others from the line of Mbeu—Kijji and
 Mbeu—did the same. Besides these, three of the later immigrants
 became nobles of Ngonde. There was Mbeu who, says himself,
 "was a good drum player and so was sent for by the Kyungu to come and
 live at Mbande." There was Mbeu, who came from Mbeu
 (Aberdeen), and there was Kijji, whose lineage we do not know.

⁴ The two exceptions are Kyungu and Kyungu. Once one of the Kyungus
 married a wife of the Kyungu and had to flee for his life across the lake;
 while Kyungu's descendants have become just ordinary commoners for some
 reason unknown to us.

mediated between the divine Kyungu and the outer world, while both in the hills and in the plain the territorial nobles governed each his own people without royal rivals—for most of the sons of the Kyungu were killed at birth. 173
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The exact conditions which led to this state of affairs are beyond our knowledge; there is no detailed evidence to explain just how the descendants of a wandering adventurer who succeeded to the camp and the ivory of "a great elephant hunter" should have become divine kings jealously controlled by their subordinates. All we can do is to set down in all its vagueness and uncertainty, such information as the tradition offers us.

The three crucial facts were, firstly the wealth of the Kyungu, which gave the other rulers a secular interest in them, secondly the constant immigration of important men, which kept up the numbers of these other rulers, and, thirdly, the killing of most of the sons of the Kyungu at birth; a custom whereby the territorial nobles were rid of possible rivals and the nobles of Ngondo were rid of possible supporters of the Kyungu against themselves. Reuben Mwenifumbo told us: "They feared that, if the Kyungu had many sons, they might seduce his wives and so bring sickness on him himself and on the country.⁵ And they also feared that, if many of the Kyungu's sons grew up, they might destroy the nobles, they might ask, when the Kyungu died, how it was that he had died so suddenly!—I refer to his being killed when he fell sick or cut himself.—If there were only a few sons they could not protest (being only few), but if there had been many then all the nobles might have had their throats cut. So they kept two sons only alive. This was told me by the old Mulwa,⁶ the father of the present Mulwa. He knew a great deal about the things of old. I asked him one day why the sons of Kyungu had been killed and he answered what I have just told you." Two reasons are given here: first the magical danger to the Kyungu (and through him to his people) of infidelity on the part of his wives, for his sons would naturally have more access to the sacred enclosure than other men; and second the danger that his sons might prevent his being killed when sick. The danger that they would supplant the territorial nobles is not mentioned, but it is hard to believe that the nobles were not conscious of it.

The nobles, both territorial and of Ngondo, still speak of themselves to-day as a single group with common interests opposed, to some extent, to those of the Kyungu and the chiefs; and, when we compare Ngondo with the Nyakusa, it seems probable that there was some causal connection between the wealth of the Kyungu and the constant increase 643
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⁵ *Ibid.* *infra* Section 3 (ii).

⁶ Mulwa is the premier noble of Ngondo.

643 in the nobles' numbers by immigration, on the one hand, and the class
585 maintained by the nobles of Ngonde over the family life of the early
Kyungu, on the other. The Lwembe of Lubaga was, like the Kyungu
an immigrant into his district and he also had a group of hereditary
priests living with him who, both in their origins and their religious
functions exactly corresponded to the nobles of Ngonde; and they used
to kill the Lwembe when he fell sick. But they neither developed many
secular functions themselves nor ever prevented the royal family of the
Lwembe from increasing. The sons of the Lwembe founded hereditary
chiefdoms from the first. There had been indigenous rulers among the
Nyakyusa prior to the coming of the Lwembe, but they were soon dis-
placed by his sons and did not maintain themselves within the consti-
tution. But then the Lwembe was poor, and among the Nyakyusa there
was not the constant immigration of important men unrelated to
the Lwembe¹ as there was into Ngonde of important men unrelated to
the Kyungu. The comparison thus suggests very strongly a causal
connection between these facts; but the exact mechanism of the connection
is obscure.

173 The reasons for the killing of the Kyungu himself will be fully dis-
cussed in section three. But it must be mentioned here that the history
643 of Ngonde is full of refusal on the part of prospective heirs to accept the
585 position of Kyungu, and that one of the reasons for refusal was the short
life that a Kyungu so often had. In order to refuse it was usually
necessary to flee, for an heir once forcibly seized by the nobles of
Ngonde and set on the stool of the Kyungu could not abdicate; if he
did it was believed he would die. And thus was founded the house of
Katamba (or Mwenitete) in the plain north of Songwe River. One of
the early Kyungus died and "two of his sons, Katamba and a younger
brother, fled across the Songwe to live, to their grandfather; for the
name Mwenitete is in origin a noble not a royal name, the Kyungu had
married the daughter of the noble Mwenitete. They fled because they
feared to die on Mbanda!"

In Itezi the house of Katamba became hereditary chiefs and began
to spread their power through all the surrounding plain. But later the
Nyakyusa came down from the hills and drove them back across
Songwe. The boundaries of Ngonde² in this early period, were thus
wider than they are to-day. The plain north of the Songwe (which the

¹ There was another immigration into the district of the Nyakyusa, but it was
not, as was tradition, by a close kinsman of the Lwembe, whose son, like the
Lwembe's own, became hereditary chief. (The Kakeo are ignored in this
context.)

² Using "Ngonde" always in the sense of the area of the Kyungu's supremacy.

Nyakyusa chiefs afterwards conquered, but which is still known as "Ms-Ngonde") was certainly included in it. And the men of Ngonde do claim that Mwaemba of the Ndali hills, and Majombe and others in the present Northern Rhodesia were nobles of the Kyungu and sent him tribute.

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How much secular power the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde then had we cannot know; but, as in the later period it can be proved to have been more effective in the plain near Mbunde than in the hills, it is not unreasonable to suppose that so it was in the early period also.

Trade with the outer world there was, so legend says, from the first, and this trade went north. The present Kyungu told us: "The Kyungu used to send ivory to the coast, they sent men over the hills of the Ndali; the ivory that they took from Simlobwe went that way. And the men used to come back with cloths and iron goods and white crockery. This I heard from Mwakalengula who died as a very, very old man in the year 1900 or perhaps it was 1901."

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In later times the central power of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde can be proved to have rested on the twin bases of religious faith and the control of great wealth; as these two conditions seem both to have been present in the early period we can assert with some confidence that then also they were the real bases of the central power.

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(b) A TURNING POINT.

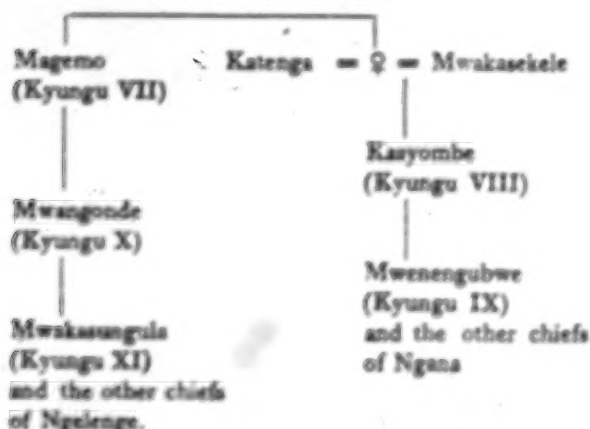
"Kyungu Magumo had a sister who was married to Katengu, one of the nobles of Ngonde. And one day when the other nobles of Ngonde went to Ngana (a district of Ngonde) to fish—for fish were plentiful in Ngana—this woman followed them, and there she married Mwakaakale a man of Ngana. So the nobles returned and told Magumo that his sister had been taken to wife in Ngana, and all he said was, 'very well.' Later she bore a son to Mwakaakale and Kyungu Magumo named him Kasyombe."

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Now Magumo himself when he died left only one son, Mwangunde, and he had only survived by an accident. Mwangunde's mother came from Butambo (in the present Northern Rhodesia) and was a distant relative of Mulwa, another noble of Ngonde. Her delivery was unexpected and took place in the house of one of Mulwa's near kinsmen. So Mulwa hid her and the child, and then sent her away to Butambo. The other nobles of Ngonde accused him of having done so and were angry, for they wished to kill the child if it were a boy. Mulwa denied his action, but afterwards they heard that the child was a boy and alive. Now but for Mulwa the direct line of the Kyungu would have died out,

for apparently those sons of Magemo who had been kept alive died¹ before him, and Mwangonde was his only surviving son. But even so Mwangonde was far too young to inherit when Magemo died, he was only an infant; and so the nobles of Ngonde took Kasyombe both to inherit Magemo's wives and to be the Kyungu.

The Early Kyungu



This was a turning point in Ngonde's history: Kasyombe's descendants are the "chiefs of Ngana," or "the cousins" (*Abatani*), Mwangonde's descendants are the "chiefs of Ngelenge,"² the direct line; and Ngonde's history from this time on is full of their rivalry. Not only did two royal houses result from this event but other momentous political changes as well. For Kasyombe when he succeeded had an adult son, Mwafongo, who had been brought up in Ngana and was not afraid of the nobles at Mbande.³ "When they took Kasyombe to be the

¹ It is also said that Magemo "went mad and killed his own children."

² These are territorial and not family (or clan) names. Kasyombe and his descendants are called chiefs of Ngana because his mother's husband, the commoner Mwakasekele, lived in Ngana. And so too Mwangonde, when he returned from the hills, settled in Ngelenge and began children there before he was taken to be Kyungu. And so his sons are called chiefs of Ngelenge.

³ The point is this: the two sons of the Kyungu who had been normally allowed to survive, in the early period, were brought up at Mbande to respect and fear the nobles of Ngonde as their "fathers"; and do not seem to have many personal followers of their own. Moreover if both survived their own father, the Kyungu, then both would be prospective successors and each would be far too much concerned with his own destiny to worry about anything else (cf. the story of Kamanda on page 14). But Mwafongo was an outsider and so had a far greater freedom of action; and he seems to have had followers of his own.

Kyungu his son Mwafongo approached the nobles and said that if they killed either his father or any of his brothers then he would kill them all. And thus it was that the chiefs of Ngana increased so greatly. But as for killing the Kyungu, the nobles did so in spite of Mwafongo's threats! And when Mwangonde succeeded, the chiefs of Ngana came again to the nobles and forbade them to kill his sons; so thus the chiefs of Ngelenge increased also. And yet, seeing that there were only a few sons of Mwangonde and many daughters we think that, after all, some of his sons were put away! When one of Mwangonde's wives whose father was an important man bore a son, then they would let him live, fearing lest the chiefs of Ngana be told; but if her father was a man of no great weight then they would kill her son."

On the wives of Magemo Kasymbembe got Mwenengubwe, Kalambo, Kilupula, Mwabulambo and other sons too; while Mwangonde, when he grew up begot Kalonga, Mpeta, Mwansele, Mboma and so on. The killing of the sons of Kyungu was, if not quite abandoned, at least limited; and from that time onwards the power of the nobles began to lessen.

There seems no reason to doubt the accuracy of this story, which is universally current in Ngonde to-day; and if we can accept it we have here one of those historical events in which chance circumstances have radically altered the customary behaviour of a group of people. Had Mwangonde not been saved by Mulwa the line of Ngana would have succeeded alone and finally¹ to the Kyunguship, had Mwangonde been older when Magemo died it would not have succeeded at all; and in neither case would two royal houses have been set up. Had Kasymbembe not happened to have a determined and forceful son, the killing of the sons of Kyungu would not then have been stopped. But, as it was, the existence of the two lines of chiefs, together with the continual increase of both led to a transformation of Ngonde's constitution.

And there is another minor change which tradition traces to this same event. In the times of the early Kyungus, we are told, Katenga was the premier noble of Ngonde; but after his wife left him for Mwakaakele, without protest from his royal brother-in-law, he retired for a time from public life and Mulwa, who soon afterwards gained fame as the saviour of the Ngelenge line, took his place. And Mulwa is still the premier noble of Ngonde to-day.

¹ But what of the line of the Katembas? There is here an old constitutional principle involved which we did not sufficiently study. It appears that once a son of the Kyungu had fled from succession his descendants could never succeed again. (cf. The case of Kalonga pp. 27-8). But this principle no longer operates to-day, for both the present Kyungu and his predecessor were sons of Malama, who himself fled from the succession (cf. p. 67).

(c) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.*

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643 When Kasyombe died Mwenengubwe succeeded, for Mwangonde, though now grown up, was still living in Butambo. Mwenengubwe was the eldest of those sons whom Kasyombe had begotten on the wives of Magemo, and he began that process of gradual emergence from religious seclusion which the present Kyungu has completed. The early Kyungus had all lived on the top of Mbande, cut off from the outside world not only by their enclosure but also by the steep sides of the hill; Mwenengubwe and his successors lived in the plain at its foot, by the Lukulu River. This change appears to have been connected with the unsuccessful effort of the chiefs of Ngana to control the killing of the Kyungus. Three of the present nobles of Ngonde took me up Mbande and explained on the way: "At first all the Kyungus were installed on the summit of the hill, but Mwenengubwe came down to the valley; Kasyombe was the last to live on the summit. The Kyungus came down to the valley because they were afraid to live on the hill, they thought that no Kyungu ever lived long on Mbande, always they died quite soon. And so, after Mwenengubwe had come down from the hill, they installed his successors in the valley, in the house of the Kyungu." But still they lived at Mbande in the midst of the nobles of Ngonde, and still their houses were surrounded with an enclosure that only the nobles of Ngonde might freely enter.

On the death of Mwenengubwe, Mwangonde succeeded.¹ From now onwards the traditions of Ngonde are full of warfare, civil and tribal; but more important than the wars themselves are the accompanying constitutional and commercial changes of which we get occasional glimpses.

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439 About this time the direction of the trade in ivory changed. The present Kyungu told us: "Later, after the first Kyungu, Mwangonde and his successors used to exchange the ivory with Marabi who came from across the lake; the men of Mwela rowed them across. These traders brought cloths, red and white and dark cloths. But when the first Kyungu arrived in Ngonde there was no trade-route across the lake at all." And one of the Kyungus about this time is said to have "struck the lake and walked over to Mwela to marry a woman, Mapunda." And the present Kyungu told us that, besides the trade with these Marabi, there had also been trade with the men of Mwela

¹ "When Kasyombe died Mwenengubwe inherited the position of Kyungu. Mwangonde refused it and continued living with his mother's family in Butambo. But the nobles discussed together and decided it was not fitting that Mwangonde should live in another country and they went to invite him back. He agreed to come; at first he only paid a short visit to Ngonde and went back again, but the second time he came and stayed. So when Mwenengubwe died they set Mwangonde on Mbande."

themselves, and with the Kisi. With the people of Mwela they exchanged canoes for hoes. And from the Kisi also they got hoes, which the Kisi in their turn had got in exchange from the Kinga.

Then, during the reigns of Mwangonde and his successors "the sons of the Kyungu" began more and more to displace the territorial nobles as rulers of the various districts of the Ngonde plain. They became hereditary chiefs (*avanyafyale*), each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided his country and tried to extend it. And thus the number of ruling chiefs now began to increase at a great rate. Each of the territorial nobles, on the other hand, was only succeeded by a single heir. Houses of chiefs were set up and a new hierarchy appeared, for the senior chief in each house ranked as the "father" of his juniors. The name of the founder of each house was preserved as a hereditary title borne by each head of that house in turn. Thus to-day we find in the Ngonde plain the house of the Katambas, (or Mwenitetes),¹ the house of the Kalongas, the house of the Mwakasungulas and so on, and, among the chiefs of Ngana, the house of the Mwafongos, the house of the Mwenengubwes, the house of the Kalombos, the house of the Kilupulas and so on. The heads of these houses were the great chiefs of Ngonde, subordinate to the Kyungu and each with a number of junior chiefs traditionally subordinate to him. Most of these great titles can be traced back to some important son either of Mwangonde or of Kaayombe; but in some cases junior branches also have acquired sufficient importance to be distinguished by hereditary titles which are borne by their heads². Whenever the bearer of one of these great titles became the Kyungu, his old title was at once taken by a successor in his house.

The chiefs supplanted the territorial nobles and took their subjects for their own in this way: "A great many territorial nobles have lost their power, for the Kyungus were in the habit of sending their sons to build with them in their countries. A Kyungu would send one of his sons (i.e. a chief) to a certain noble saying 'I send this your son to build with you, his father'—for the nobles were called 'father' by the sons of the Kyungu—, so the noble would welcome him. But in after years the people would give their affection to the son of the Kyungu and the noble would lose his power. And yet, even so, in the old days the two of them, chief and noble, would remain on friendly terms." "Some of the nobles lost their power through the cunning of the chiefs. For example the noble Mwenifumbo used to have a country of his own,

¹ This house, as we have seen, dates from the early period.

² The first Malema, for instance, was a son of Mwakasungula, the first Kajuni of Mwenengubwa.

[text continues on p. 21]

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but then he was given a young chief, Mwakijule, to look after as a child. The father of Mwakijule (who was not the Kyungu) asked Mwenifumbo to bring him up; but then when he grew up he became the ruler of the country!" And others lost their power to young chiefs who had married their daughters and then come to live near them.

Now all informants agree on three points: Firstly that it was the prestige of the royal blood which was responsible for this loss of power, secondly that the process was a gradual one and thirdly that the chiefs and the dispossessed nobles generally continued to live together on amicable terms. "The people gave their affection to the son of the Kyungu," but not all at once; some men at first would continue to regard themselves as the noble's men while others looked more to the chief. The noble acquiesced in this process and became in the end but the most important and respected commoner of the new chiefdom. For the chiefs apparently always treated such nobles with the greatest consideration, continued to call them "father" and to defer to their advice. The nobles retained all their religious functions and their right to participate in the selection of Kyungus and great chiefs, while their own titles continued to be handed on with due ceremony to their successors. All that they lost was leadership in war, the power of requisitioning food, together with the main responsibility for feasting the common people, and the formal position of chief justice. But in actual fact a noble's opinion on a law case was probably seldom disputed by the chief who had asked for it.

We have already suggested that during this middle period the balance of secular power between the nobles of Ngonde and the divine Kyungu himself began to change, and we have noted his descent from Mbande and the stopping of the killing of his sons as undoubted examples of this. But the nobles of Ngonde still had the real power at Mbande: "they alone conversed with the Kyungu; no one else saw him except when they went in to make obeisance. All orders came from them. Even with the *masano*, the wives of the Kyungu, it was the nobles of Ngonde who put each one into the house of the Kyungu for a week at a time and then took her out and put in another. No one else built their houses near the Kyungu except these nobles (and their own immediate followers.)"

Such incidents as the going to war of Kyungu Mwakasungula, and the abandonment of the custom of building an enclosure (*salapaso*) in the reign of Mwambele³ seem significant in the light of modern developments; but we cannot be sure that any very radical constitutional change would

³ Vide infra pp. 28-9.

● 173 necessarily have followed from them, had modern conditions been
643 different. The evidence is inconclusive.
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565 Now not all territorial nobles in the Ngonde plain have been
642 supplanted by "the sons of the Kyungus" even to-day; while in the
622 hills inland they have mostly retained their power. And so in
discussing the political system of Ngonde under the middle Kyungus,
it is necessary to distinguish carefully between four different kinds of
political unit: (1) the chiefdoms in the plain, each ruled by a hereditary
chief related to the Kyungu; (2) the fiefs (if I may adapt this word from
a feudal to a primitive context) in the plain, ruled by hereditary nobles
unrelated to the Kyungu; (3) the fiefs in the hills inland, also ruled by
hereditary nobles, but differing in many ways from the fiefs in the plain,
and (4) the chiefdoms of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme in the hills.

642 This paper is mainly concerned with chiefdoms and fiefs of the
622 plain. There each of the chiefdoms consisted, as among the Nyakyusa,
of a group of age-villages, older and younger men living apart with their
own contemporaries. At the head of each village was a headman, or
great-commoner (*ulifwaa*) chosen for life from among the villagers by
the chief and the great-commoners (*umafwaa*) of the senior villages of
the chiefdom. Except in the case of very small chiefdoms each chief
was succeeded by two or more sons who divided the villages among
them. The transference of power from the old chief to his sons normally
began in his lifetime at the "coming out" (*uwawaka*) when they were
formally shown to the country as chiefs and magically treated. The
constitution of every chiefdom was that of limited monarchy, for the
chief was dependent upon his great-commoners, who advised and, in
many ways, controlled him. In the status of chief and great-commoners
religious elements played an important part.

642 But, whereas among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom, save the very
622 small ones, was, in secular matters, quite independent of its neighbours
643 and each chief was a sovereign, in Ngonde, on the other hand, the wealth
565 of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde made them the apex of a
political hierarchy. And thus, while among the Nyakyusa the senior of
two brother chiefs could only command his junior in religious matters,
when they sacrificed to their common father's spirit, in Ngonde he
could occasionally command him in other ways also, he could, for
example, summon him to war or to law,³ and he had a certain slight
judicial authority.⁴ Of two brother chiefs the junior was subordinate
to the senior; in each of the great houses all other chiefs were subordi-
nate to the head of the house, the great chief with a hereditary title;

³ Vide infra sections 4 and 6.

⁴ Vide infra section 2.

[text continues on p. 24]

that the organization of Mbande may be described either as a group of small fiefs clustered together or as the capital chiefdom of the Kyungu, in which the nobles of Ngondo acted as the great commoners, each in two small age-villages. 642
565

Besides the nobles of Ngondo and their own followers there lived at Mbande men called *wakabata*, who acted as the personal messengers and police of the Kyungu. They were not hereditary officials but chosen for their speed by the nobles of Ngondo, who also gave them their orders. Anyone might become a messenger, the son of a chief, or of a commoner, or even a slave. 624
202

Of the customs of the hill fiefs and of the chiefdom, of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme we know very little; but it is certain that in many of them different dialects were spoken from that of the plain and that their inhabitants called themselves (as they still do to-day) Sukwa, Wenya, Lambya, and so on, rather than "men of Ngondo." And these upland groups were much more loosely attached to the central power at Mbande than were the people of the plain. 642
565

There is some evidence to show that, even in the early period, the nobles of Ngondo did not always take the most immediate heir of a dead Kyungu to succeed him; during the middle period it is certain that they did not. The Kyungu had to be taken from the royal family but, within limits, the most suitable man might be chosen. And with the increase in the numbers of the chiefs the area of selection grew constantly wider. The constitutional methods of selection will be discussed in section five.

(4) THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CIVIL WARS.

We must now turn to the rivalry between the chiefs of Ngulungu and Ngana. "Mwangonde begot Kalungu, Mpeta,¹ and Mwanale. And they, when they grew up, quarrelled with the sons of Karyonde: 'Let them move further off, they are only commoners, we object to their proximity!' So they made war on them and drove them flying out of Ngana with only a few men. Before this war began their father Mwangonde had forbidden them to fight and commanded them to be friends." We notice here a point, which will be discussed later in section five, that the Kyungus, though not themselves involved in the civil wars, yet had little or no power to keep the peace. 173

"Then the sons of Karyonde went to the Ndali to make allies of them and they returned together and fought the sons of Mwangonde

¹ cf. Section 3.

² Mpeta (with *nghe*) later took the name of Mwanamungu.

• 73 in Ngelenge. And in that war both Kalongo and Mwanale were killed, only Mpeta (that is Mwakaungula) was left. He went to tell the Kyungu, his father, that two of his sons were dead and his father said: 'Even so, did I not forbid you to fight?' And the Kyungu called together Mpeta and the chiefs of Ngana and blessed them and made peace between them at Mbande. He gave the chiefs of Ngana the lands of Ngelenge and Mpeta. . . . His son Mpeta he sent to Kiaku. The second civil war then ended in a decisive defeat for the chiefs of Ngelenge; and the peace-making of Kyungu Mwangunde was but an acquiescence in that defeat. Mpeta was sent into exile, for Kiaku is a little district at the north-east corner of the lake, beyond the plain which the Nyakyusa had now taken. Ngelenge has been held by the chiefs of Ngana ever since, and Kilopula has it still. And Mpeta, which is close to Mbande on the North, is still theirs also.

While in exile Mpeta led the men of Kiaku to war against a Nyakyusa chief from the hills, named Mwakaungula; he killed him and took his name; and thereafter he is always referred to in tradition by it.

The return of Mwakaungula from exile was caused by a drought, combined with the faith which the men of Ngonde had in the rainmaking powers of their royal family. They went to Kyungu Mwangunde and asked what they had done to deserve a drought. He denied the implication that he had caused it himself but suggested, none the less, that the exile of his son Mwakaungula might have something to do with it; perhaps it was Mwakaungula who was angry. "So they went to Mwakaungula, the chiefs of Ngana and everyone, and told him that in Ngonde they were dying of drought—he replied that he would follow them. And so he did, he passed through Ngelenge and came as far as Kyimbwe and the people heard that he had come. And that very day the rain came, heavy rain, and the Lukulu, which had dried up, filled up again—while Mwakaungula was still on the way, before he had even arrived at Mbande. And all men, when they saw this miracle, were astonished and urged the chiefs of Ngana to respect Mwakaungula, for they had all but perished. And Mwangunde summoned Mwakaungula and his cousins (the chiefs of Ngana) and commanded them to live together in friendship and never to fight again. And he gave Mwakaungula land on the coast by the lake." And this land the house of Mwakaungula still holds.

And then, after the return of Mwakaungula from exile, there was a great campaign fought against the Bemba in the country of Majimbe in the hills. The Bemba chief Kyupule had invaded that country, and Majimbe, as say the traditions of Ngonde, sent to the Kyungu for

help. Mwakaungula led the forces of Ngonde and was the hero of the war; he defeated the Bemba and killed Kypelo, returning to Ngonde with a host of Bemba captives who were there enslaved.¹

MIDDLE AND MODERN KYUNGU.

Line of Ngolongo.

Mageno.

Mwangunde.

Mwakaungula.

Mwambelo.

(The Europeans arrive 1875).

Mwakabanga (1894-1904).

Mwangula (1904-1932).

Peter (the reigning Kyungu).

Line of Ngoma.

Kanyombe.

Mwenzungulwe.

Gwa Sapani.

Mwafungu.

Mwachulambo

(deposed 1894).

When Mwangunde died Mwakaungula was taken as the Kyungu, but not until Kalunga had refused the position for himself. The first holder of the name "Kalunga," as we have seen, had been killed in civil war. But after his death one of his younger half-brothers, Mhoma (or Kanyig), inherited his name and his wives. Now, as the first Kalunga had been the senior son of Mwangunde, so Mhoma, by inheriting from him, became the senior in his turn. Though much younger than Mwakaungula he ranked above him. But when the nobles of Ngonde tried to install him as the Kyungu "he himself refused the position, he smeared ash on his body and refused, he swore the position saying 'I do not desire the name of Kyungu; my brother Mwakaungula here was our father's companion for many years and all the medicines of chieftainship are in his possession; how is it that you take me instead

¹ Bemba tradition. The present Bemba chief Mwambi told me that this campaign took place in the reign of the Chitumbulu Capulo. Capulo did not himself go to fight but his brother, Mwambi, did and was defeated by the men of Ngonde. He died of his wounds on his way home.

It thus appears that the country of Mwambi was then just on the boundary between the Bemba sphere of influence and that of Ngonde.

173 of him? And it is he that has done the fighting out II' And so they caught Mwakaungula to be the Kyungu." Thereafter, though the house of Kalonga has always been recognized as a senior branch of the royal family, no member of it has ever been made Kyungu.

After the extinction of Mwakaungula there was a third and final war between the rival lines: "When the sons of Mwakaungula grew up they remembered that the chiefs of Ngana had killed their fathers and wished for revenge. So they fought and killed two of them. And then the chiefs of Ngana were satisfied and declared the quarrel at an end; for as the chiefs of Ngana had killed their fathers so now they in their turn had killed some chiefs of Ngana, the old score was paid." Whether the chiefs of Ngana would have acquiesced in this "settlement of scores" we cannot tell, for now Ngondo had to meet the challenge of the Ngoni.

(2) THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: THE NGONI WARS.

Before the reign of Mwakaungula no Kyungu, says tradition, had ever gone to war, "but when the Ngoni came their enmity was like that of the lions and their number like that of the ants, and as Kyungu Mwakaungula, seeing his people were terrified, took up arms in person and said he would die fighting. And his people heeded with one and accordment that he himself had come to fight and they determined to die with him." Thus, under the pressure of extraordinary circumstances, a man who had often fought before broke through the traditional privacy of his divine office. Though the step was never repeated yet its occurrence made a great impression on his people and it is still cited as one of the stages in the emergence of the Kyungu from their religious seclusion.

The course of the Ngoni wars, in the tradition of Ngondo, was briefly as follows: the first appearance of the Ngoni in Ngondo took place during the reign of Mwakaungula; he himself led his people against them and killed their chief Kwakumbwa-Kalila; they fled and he pursued them out of the country. And again they came and again the men of Ngondo repulsed them.

"Then they took counsel together and decided that we men of Ngondo were too skilled with our spears ever to be beaten by daylight, but we might be surprised at night." So the next attack was a raid on Mbande by night; Mwakaungula, alone and unaided, slew six Ngoni and they fled; but he himself was left fatally wounded.

¹ One of our informants, however, maintained that Kyungu Mwakaungula fought the Ngoni twice in person.

Mwambelo, younger brother of Mwakaungula, succeeded and abandoning the enclosure at Mbande, went to live by the lake shore.¹ And so yet another step was taken from the traditional religious exclusion. His successors returned to Mbande; but the custom of building an enclosure round the homes of the Kyungu was not resumed.

In his reign Mwafuliwa, chief of the next tribe to the south of Ngonde, sought aid against the Nguni and the men of Ngonde responded and won a battle. But the Nguni then replied with another night raid in which they found Mwambelo alone in his house and killed him and returned home. Another attack followed before a new Kyungu had been installed, but it was repulsed, "for this time they had come by day!"

"And then the nobles of Ngonde made Gwa Sapasi Kyungu; he was a son of Kalambo, a chief of Ngana; for they said that, as so many of the chiefs of Ngorongo had been killed by the Nguni, they would now take one of their cousins again as the Kyungu." And now at last Ngonde submitted to the Nguni. Gwa Sapasi, with the concurrence of all the chiefs and all the nobles save one² sent a tusk of ivory to the Nguni chief Mkwalo. "And from that time forwards the Nguni never fought with us again."

A few years later, in 1875, after Gwa Sapasi had died and been succeeded by Mwafingo, the Europeans first visited Ngonde. Arab slave traders established themselves there about the same time, and with the struggle between the two races for the possession of Ngonde the modern period begins.

3. RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).

The traditional status of the Kyungu had in part a religious basis.³ The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects: while in his own flesh and in some of his possessions magical power was believed to reside. But the Kyungu was not alone in his religious potency, he was but the greatest of many. The nobles of Ngonde and the territorial nobles, the chiefs both great and small, professional rainmakers and doctors, the great-commoners of the villages, heads of families and even ordinary men and women—all alike were believed to have some access to, some dealings with divine or

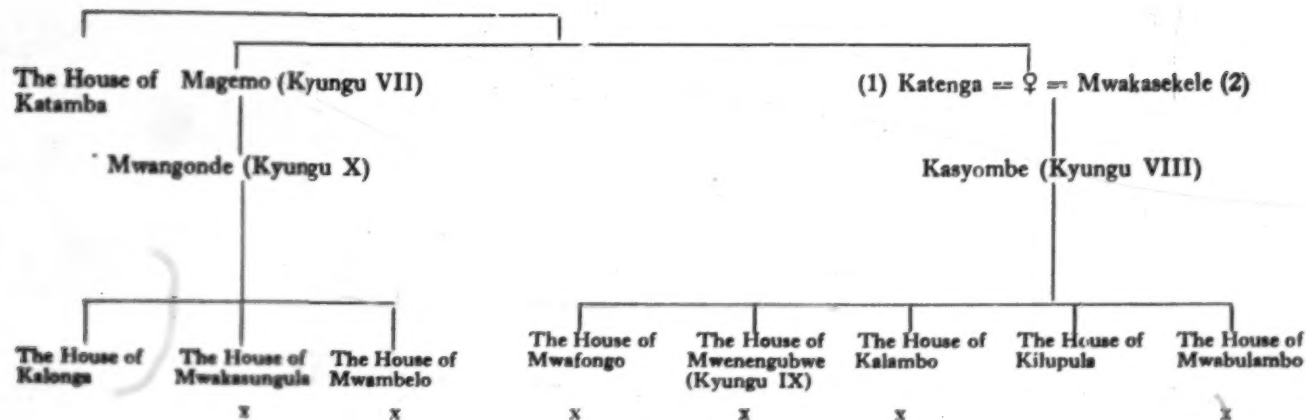
¹ These nobles of Ngonde, in recounting this story, maintained that Mwambelo was dead.

² He was Mwakaungula, whose story is omitted here for lack of space.

³ On this paper is concerned only with political institutions so full analysis of the whole religion of Ngonde is here attempted, only those aspects of it are dealt with which have political significance.

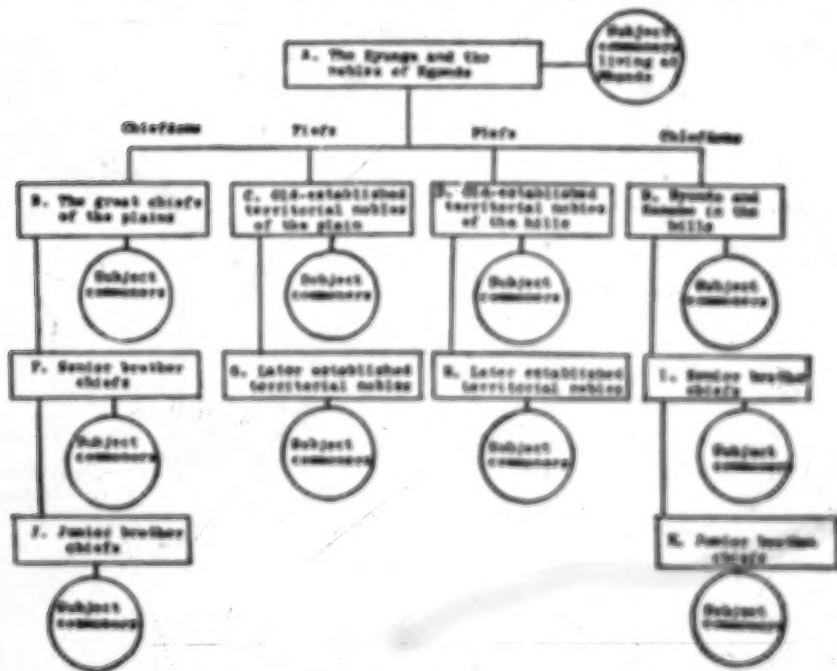
THE TWO ROYAL LINES (MIDDLE PERIOD).

THE EARLY KYUNGUS



x = Houses which actually provided Kyungus in the middle period.

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE IN THE MIDDLE PERIOD



173
642

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated
by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told
me that "now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes."
But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by
prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In
each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and
some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming
of misfortune (*shukungulaku*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said
always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon
them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya
is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya,
many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chief-
doms of the Mwambo are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices.
Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original
chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight
or nine generations ago; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are
descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a
brother of Lwembe; and though the Kukwe and Mwambo chiefs are not
related, yet those of the Mwambo who are nearest to Lubaga used to send
cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this
grove had.

622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisiya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has
not been carried out for forty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga
was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir
James Fraser's "Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboo, in which
not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility
also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his
own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been
properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at
Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next
[72] tribe to the East, the Kings, who live on the heights of the Livingstone
Mountains; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kings and moved down
the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

COMMUNAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYA

two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakya despise the Kings as dirty in habit and obsequious in manner. There were two main invasions from the Kings: (i) that of the 'sons of Luemba' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngondale' (or Kakwa), who settled first at Kina below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kahale in the foothills to the south-east. Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakya belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngondo are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Luemba's line may be fixed between 1580 and 1620, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia and the 'sons of Ngondale' followed them some generations later (see *op. cit.*, genealogies pp. 3, 27; p. 34). Two of the invading heroes, Luemba and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

About the first inhabitants of the Nyakya valley, the *shikwa*, tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups, disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from the Kings, others came from near Lake Kakwa and were kin to the Bango of the Kakwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters¹ in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early inhabitants, the *Pujsa*, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants alone, though their descendants rule over the various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. Moreover, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or believe the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become their

¹ See *op. cit.*, of G. M. Threl, *South of South Africa*, vol. 2, p. 101.

² The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the proverbial saying: 'Where did you see me?' (*Shikwanga*). The rule is that they were very cautious about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakya was always: 'Where did you see me?' The only safe reply was: 'Yes, he was!'

9: Wilson

173

643

FM17 Ngondo

Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Chiefs of Lwembe's
Line." (Facing page 3)

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I

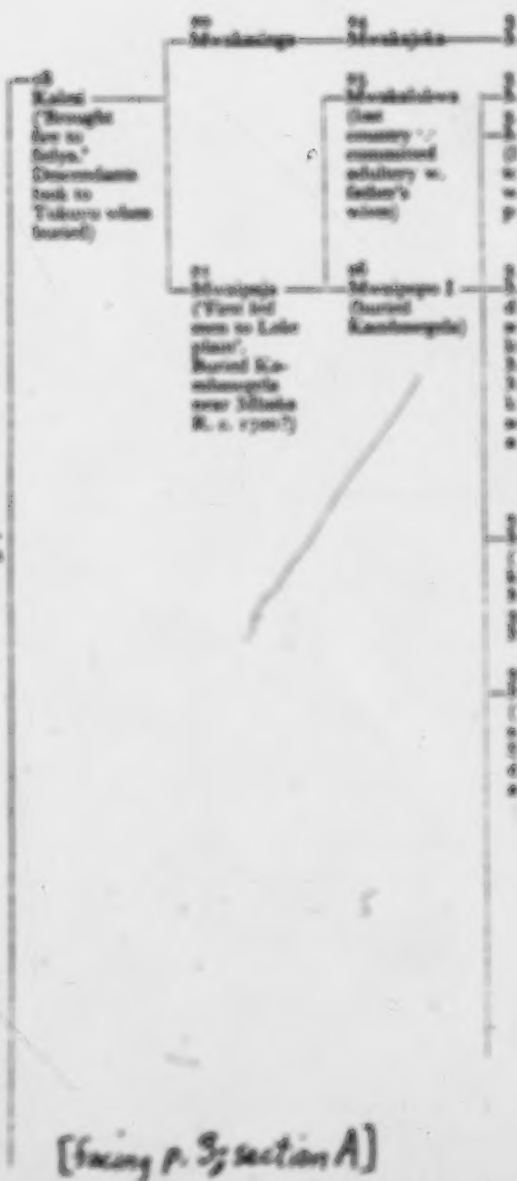
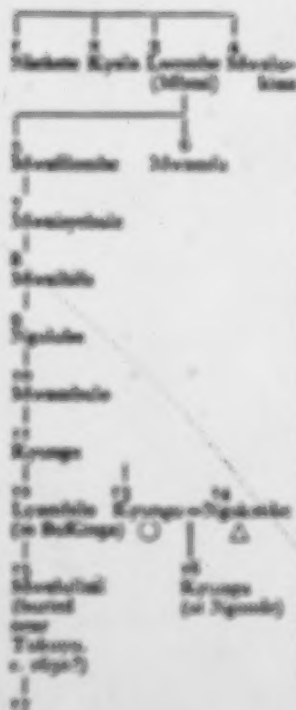
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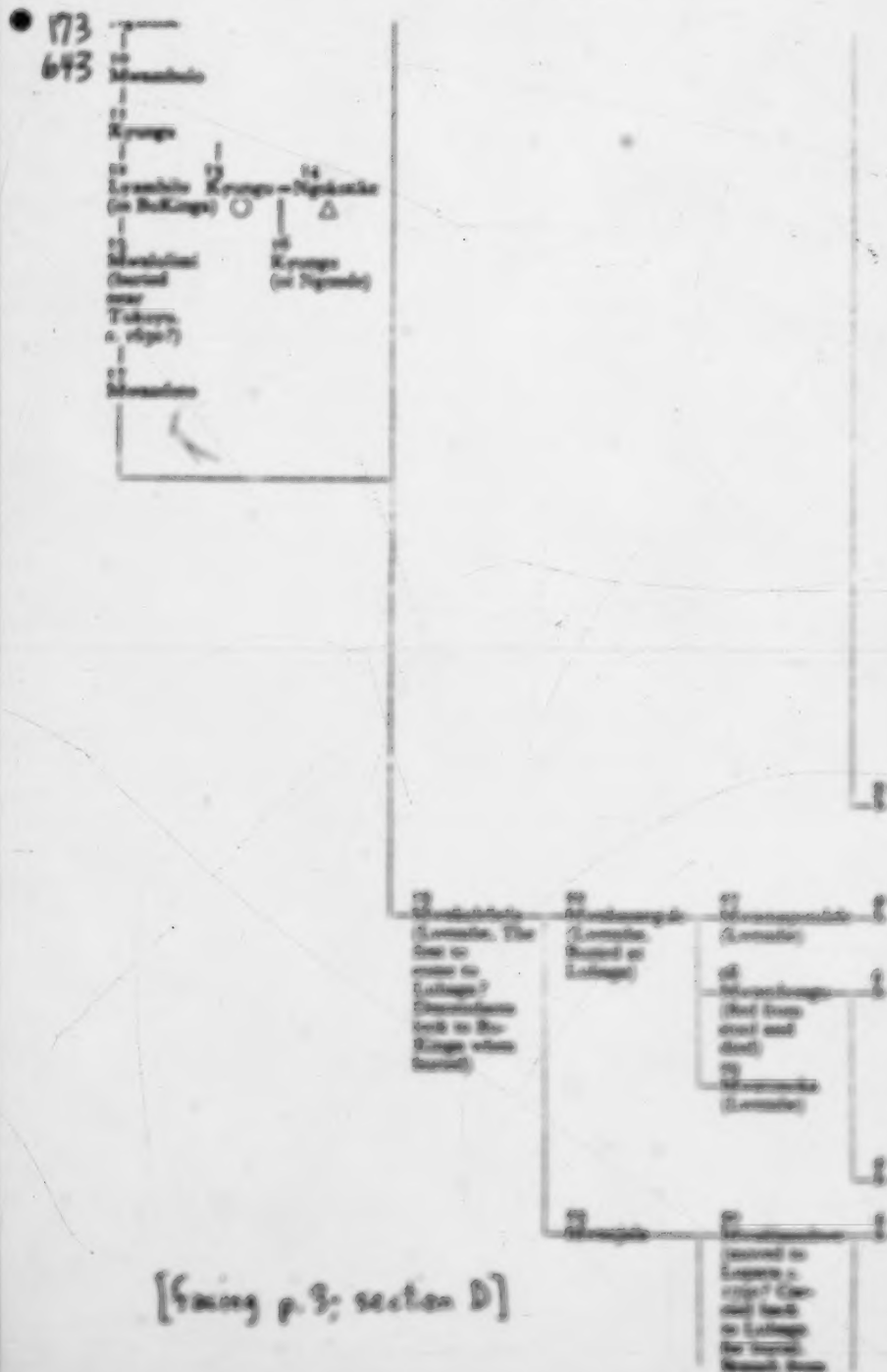
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Living representatives, to take their name, and to sacrifice at their groves, it was commoner priests who chose them and, as will be seen, put them to death when it was expedient for the good of the people. It is clear, too, from what source the commoners drew their power. The invaders were supposed to have brought into the country fire, cattle, crops, and iron; they were creators, the guarantors and preservers of fertility; and it was to foster and increase fertility that men worshipped and sacrificed at the groves of the mythical heroes. The aborigines, on the other hand, without fire, without iron, and feeding on raw meat as the myth depicts them, possessed one weapon of terrible potency, witchcraft, which no chief, not even a priest of the chief's lineage, could withstand or would dare to challenge. To the Nyakyusa the essential nature of the universe, established in history and in the institutions of their society, was reciprocity, a balance between chief and commoners, between cattle-owners and cultivators, between the creative power of the heroes and the black anger of the witches. The idea of a chief who was a dictator was as foreign as the idea of a single omnipotent creator. Moreover, there was a multiplicity of chiefs, no single central authority.

The heroic tradition, then, accounts for the differences between the chiefs and commoners and for the remarkable equilibrium that obtains between them. It accounts also, as we shall find, for the 'coming out' ritual, at least in part. It is strangely silent, however, about the origin of what is perhaps the most striking feature of Nyakyusa social life, the system of age-villages. The absence of any link between the myths of the heroes and the founding of age-villages is the more surprising in that the pattern of age-organization almost certainly came into the valley from the north-east. Only in East Africa was government based on age groups and the handing over of power from one generation to the next celebrated by whole communities. If the system of age-villages came in with the eastern invaders why is this contribution to civilized living (for the Nyakyusa regard village life as the essence of civilization) never mentioned? The only explanation we can offer is that the age structure is not necessarily linked with chieftainship, whereas the control of cattle and iron was the basis of power, and making fire was a symbol, not only of a new chieftainship, but of the vital creative force in the body of the chief. The heroic cycle justifies the relations between chief and commoners, but is not concerned with other institutions of the society.

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173
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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

173
643

(Kipuka, A
great warrior)

100
Mwakyembe II
(Mwangamilo)
101
Mwaulama
102
Mwakilima

72 Mwankenje 103 Mwaronda

104
Mwalumbe

73 Mwarungu 105 Mwarungu

74 Mwananga 75 Mwanika 106 Mwanika I
Received
Edon 1873
Thomson 1879

107 Mwanika III
(Mwanika)*
Jungo 114

76 Mwanika II ? 77 Mwanika II (Kamila) 78 Mwanika 108 Mwanika
109 Mwanika

79 Mwanika (Lomela) 80 Mwanika 81 Mwanika 82 Mwanika 110 Mwanika

83 Mwanika (Red from
died and
died)
84 Mwanika (Lomela)
85 Mwanika
86 Mwanika*
(Lomela, d.
before
1914)
87 Mwanika I
(d. before
1914)
88 Mwanika II*
(old and
died
1938)
111 Mwanika
(Mwanika)

89 Mwanika 90 Mwanika 91 Mwanika 92 Mwanika 112 Mwanika

93 Mwanika (received in
Lomela -
1914) 94 Mwanika
95 Mwanika
96 Mwanika
97 Mwanika
98 Mwanika
99 Mwanika
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106 Mwanika
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108 Mwanika
109 Mwanika
110 Mwanika
111 Mwanika
112 Mwanika

[Facing p.3; section E]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

Studying village

173
643

3

100		
—	Mwakysimbi II	C 19
	(Mwungumili)	
101		
—	Mwaulama	196
	Mwakagile†	C 19
102		
—	Mwaulima	197
	Mwakabukwa†	C 14
	(near Songwe)	

103 *M. arcuata* 198 *M. wakaibito* 102 *M. wallimale* 107 *M. wakipile* C 15
 104 *M. wallimale* 105 *M. arcuata* 106 *M. wakaibito* 101 *M. wakipile* C 16

100g 1.00 1.00
100g 1.00 1.00

106 Mwanahaba I
Received
Elton 1873
Thomson 1873

141 Mwanahaba

170 Mwanahaba
171 Mwanahaba III?
(Lazarus)
172 Mwanahaba II
(Robert)

189 Mwanahaba

C 18

140 Mowalings — 173 Mowalder?
Died fighting (Korean)
Common

107 Mowmalde III — 174 Mowmalde
(Mowmalde) —
Group 114

col 144
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col 144
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C

Rolling bottom
days. Roll
also eggs.

1999

[Gassy p. 3; section F]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173
443

(over)

22
Ntawanda
(Lwanda)

23
Mwanga

24
Ntawanda
(moved to
Lwanda in
1950? Car-
ried back
to Lwanda
for burial.
Branch from
tree on
grave
planted at
Mwanga)

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Main information: 25 : 26 : 27 :
28 : 29 : 30 : 31 : 32 : 33 : 34 : 35 : 36 : 37 : 38 : 39 : 40 : 41 : 42 : 43 : 44 : 45 : 46 : 47 : 48 : 49 : 50 : 51 : 52 : 53 : 54 : 55 : 56 : 57 : 58 : 59 : 60 : 61 : 62 : 63 : 64 : 65 : 66 : 67 : 68 : 69 : 70 : 71 : 72 : 73 : 74 : 75 : 76 : 77 : 78 : 79 : 80 : 81 : 82 : 83 : 84 : 85 : 86 : 87 : 88 : 89 : 90 : 91 : 92 : 93 : 94 : 95 : 96 : 97 : 98 : 99 : 100

The identity of 25's line is
questioned by some.

25
Ntawanda
(moved to
Lwanda; cut-
ting from
tree on
grave
planted at
Mwanga)

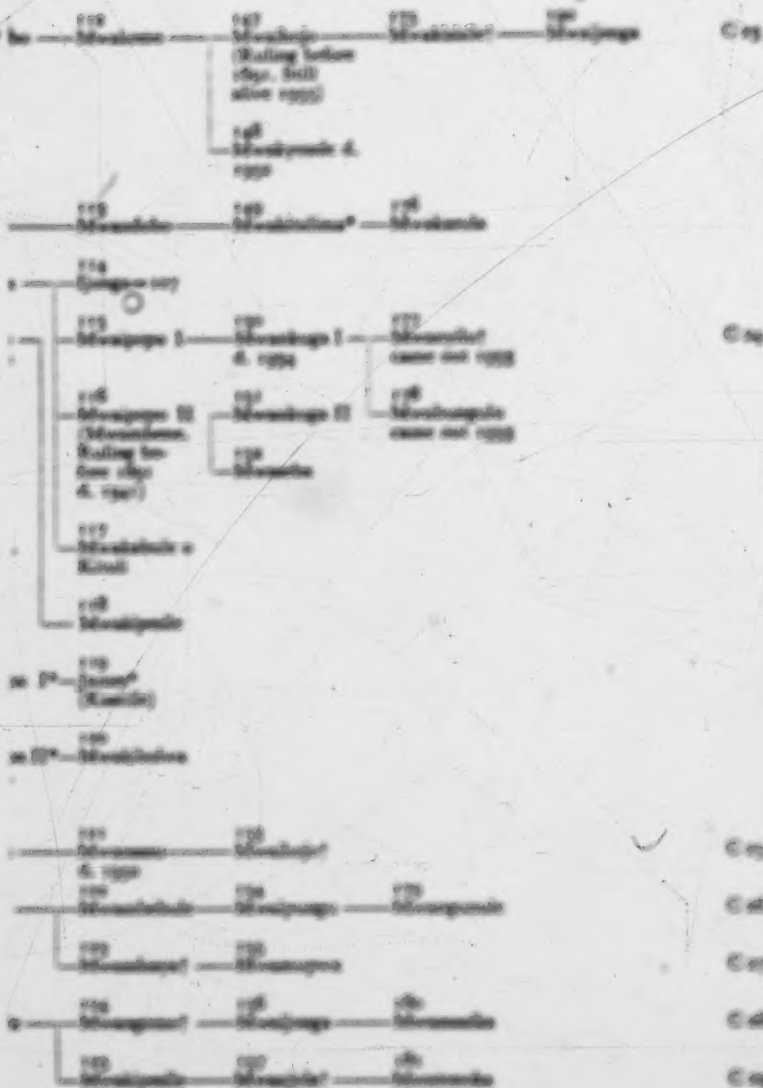
[facing p. 3; section G]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FMI7 Ngondo FMI7

Nyakyusa

173 III
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[Facing p. 3; section I]

CHAPTER II

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

7

In Nyakyusa mythology the herons were creators of crops and animals and were driven out from BuKings by a jealous father (or elder brother) who sought to kill them; but he found, when they had gone, that they had taken the fertility of the country with them, so he sent offerings after them, and still such offerings are brought to their graves in sacrifice. One of the herons, Kyala (s), created crops alone, and of him it is said that each time his father or elder brother tried to kill him he rose again; another, Luembe or Mbandi (s or 13?), created both crops and animals, brought cattle, fire, and iron to the Nyakyusa valley, and left many descendants who spread over the valley as chiefs, ruling a people who had not known chiefs.

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The names and events mentioned vary somewhat from one area to another; in some versions there were three brothers, though the eldest, Nshete (s), being buried in Kis country, does not concern the Nyakyusa; in another version the brothers had a sister who was the mother of Kyringo (r4), the hero of Ngunde; but the general pattern of heroic ancestors who were creators and discoverers, and who brought to the old inhabitants of the valley such good gifts as crops and stock, fire and iron, and the institution of chieftainship, remains the same. They all had miraculous power and are vaguely connected with volcanic disturbances, such as mentioned in the area until recent times (see *ibid.*, p. 16).

Here is an account by Kikungulole, one of the priests of BuKings, whence the herons came:

Nshete (s) and Kyala (s) were brothers, Mwanusi [the first Kings chief] killed them. Mwanusi's men tried first to kill them by cutting their throats, then by throwing them into a little lake, then by leaving a great stone and throwing it on top of them. Each time Nshete and his younger brother Kyala rose again. Then they left the country, the two of them, and the earth rumbled as they walked. Nshete (s) went to Mbandi to build; Kyala (s), the younger, to PiliKyala. Then the men of Mwanusi followed Nshete with a cow to entice him because he had taken all the food with him. Mwanusi was angry with him and his younger brother Kyala, because they made food and they were

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THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

9

went from Mwemusi's country down the path by Mwakalaba's to Mwakabali. He lived a year at Lumbila and found it too cold, and thence he went to Manku, and thence to Lubaga. All men feared him and his animals. 599

In another version Luemba's survival is linked with the possession of *ifigila*, the medicine on which still, today, the authority of [773]
[775] is thought largely to depend.

Nkukuru had much food and Mwemusi killed him because he had no *ifigila*. He killed him and he rose again. "Why don't you die?" Mwemusi asked. Nkukuru replied: "I don't know; I have nothing, I am quite alone, I have no *ifigila*." Mwemusi killed him again and he rose, many times. Then at last Nkukuru said, "I am tired." And he showed Mwemusi and his men a canoe (*olombe*) and said "Kill me by cutting my throat with this", and they did and he stayed dead.

Mwemusi feared to kill Luemba because he was very 'heavy'. He had *ifigila*, and when they tried to kill him they found his house full of animals, lions and others. . . . Once he turned himself into a stone when they tried to capture him. So Mwemusi told him to go far off, and he went with his two wives and two men, Kimole and Kimonile. He went off riding on a lion like a donkey, with a lion behind his wives, and men were astonished when they saw him.

It is perhaps significant that Luemba who survived is 'The Razer', by which Nkukuru was killed, and the python from which *ifigila* medicine is made must be killed with razors and in no other way (*side igila*, p. 6a). [789]
[825]
[576]

It is Luemba's capacity to make things live and grow which is always emphasized: [773]

Luemba and another were given millet in their hands; Luemba's sprouted, but not that of his fellow. He was told, "You plant here and the other there." The next day Luemba's had sprouted, but not that of the other. He and his friend went to a hill in dry weather and wanted water. He just struck the earth and water came out. . . . He created insects and kept them, and he moulded cattle of clay, he moulded them and they became cows, and his friends did the same and they remained clay.

When the herons were driven out there was a fearful famine in BuKings, for they had taken the fertility of the country with them, which is why, the priests say, sacrifices to them were begun by the Kings. The priests of Lubaga were explicit on the point: [773]
[775]

Milusi (Luemba 137) came from BuKings, he took the road to

599 Weakish and came here and died. The Kings went to Bulaga to buy food, for there was great hunger after Ifiani and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Ifiani. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyonga. He asked for his leopard and coromide, his drums, his bow for shooting birds, his harp, mat, a stool, handaxe bar, and tawny lion. . . . Then the Kings went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Ifiani and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Ifiani called because he had helped them in their hunger.

713 Kadile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, 713
[718] stressed only the lion. Lwanda came to Lohaga and found a
[712] good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemai (the Kings' chief) and said: "I want my lion, especially my great, eyed lion" (*ditandale dya mwa*). (The old ritual lion had perforations—"eyes"—on the sides comparable to the perforations on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kings priests come to Lohaga to sacrifice to Lwanda (3), and they bring with them lion.⁶

[645] The lion of Ngondo, the Kyonga (16), was also associated with iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the grove of the lion and his enclosure.

[972] In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwanda who introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—he found the original occupants eating their food raw—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chief, celebrated at every "coming out". The Kings priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

599 Of old in this country [BuKings] there was no fire, men ate food un-
372 cooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. This was after Mwemai came to Kings country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and other, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

⁶ The lion and spear are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their districts had used them when large, for shooting birds.

⁷ cf. Ludwig Wachter, *Nyakyusa / Affika / Eine Kultur Affika* (Berlin, 1921), p. 129. See a photograph of one.

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

11

Then the chiefs took it from him and spread it through the Kings country . . . and to the Mahali, the Ndali, the Nyakyusa. . . . It was taken to Bulinyanya before Lwamba went, when he was a child, before the killing of Mhoro and Kpala. 539 772

In the version told by Mwanishi (1957), the old blind chief of Mulungu, the various events of the cycle are rather differently combined; there were three brothers in Bulungu, Lwambilo (19) or Ngwika, Kpala, and Mhoro, and a sister, Kyimba. Lwambilo discovered how to make fire with a fire drill. Kpala was clever at making food—maize and millet—and Mhoro was clever at making animals—cattle, lions, elephants. 173 773

Then Lwambilo, the eldest, was angry that his younger brothers should be so clever; he was jealous. First he made war on Kpala, he wounded him once, but he did not die; then he wounded him again, but still he didn't die; then the third time Lwambilo put a stone in the fire and made it hot and threw it at Kpala, and he died, and was thrown into the Lake. But as soon as he died there was a great famine, no rain fell and no food grew. So they had to pray to Kpala to give them rain, and they killed a cow to sacrifice to Kpala. And as soon as they had done this much food grew. 539

Still Lwambilo was jealous of Mhoro because he could make animals. But when he went to kill him he found so many animals with him, including lions, and elephants, that he was afraid and he ran away. And he brought some home to Mhoro to say he was sorry for having tried to kill him. Then Mhoro moved from Bulungu to the Nyakyusa hills (Mwanda). . . . Lwambilo stayed in Bulungu. . . . Mhoro came down to the plain on a visit and went back to the hills, but his sister Kyimba stayed down here and married a man and bore a son. Before she came there was no fire here, she brought fire, and so they called her son Kpanga in honour of his mother because she brought fire.

When Mhoro was at Mwanda (in the hills) he made one cow, but it soon died; then he moved to Mhoro and made another cow and this soon died; then he went to Lwanga (which is still called Mhoro) and there he made one cow again which bore many many calves, and he divided his cattle among his sons. . . . Mhoro was Lwamba.

In Ngando tradition the first Kpanga (18) was a man, descendant of Ngando the Kings chief, and he travelled with four brothers and a sister westwards, passing south of Rungwa volcano, where he and his immediate successor were buried, one of them on Kipsi mountain. Their descendants went on to the 'country of the Baa', then returned eastward to Mwanda, the sacred hill which the Kpanga took from a Fija hunter, Simbabwe. Like Lwamba, 173 773

the Kyungu had a miraculous power of creating animals and it was by making elephants, buffaloes, and giraffes that Simbabwe and his men to hunt, and climbing Mt. Simbabwe when it was deserted, that he captured it. Directly he reached the top he struck his drum and 'when Simbabwe heard the drums beaten on the hill he fled to his own country'. This Kyungu's successor on Mt. Simbabwe became 'divine kings' with miraculous power much like that of the Lwanda at Lubaga. One of his brothers became chief of the Namwanga; another of the Iwa; and a third became the chief of his sister's son for the chieftainship of the Lambya. Such is the Nyondo account. The Kikwa say that the Kyungu of Nyondo came from the same line as the chiefs of Kafala, while the story of Lwanda insists that he was descended from a daughter of their line (see above, p. 2). What connection existed between the lineages of Lwanda and Nyondo is uncertain, but the supposition is that they, together with the chiefs of the Fungwa and Kisi, sprang from a common stock in BuKings.

The commonest story of origin is that all the peoples of the area, even the Ganga, emerged from a 'dark house' (nyonda adia) near the present Nyondo, and came to Ilunga (Kailunga) in the forest, in what is now Boma country. Numbi, a Nyakusa priest of the chief's lineage, with a reputation as a hunter, spoke of a 'big man' coming from 'a rocky shore to the north-west' (Lake Tanganyika?) and travelling to the east shore of Nyasa, where they increased in numbers, and then spread northwards through BuKings; Muanilunda, a noble of Nyondo, spoke of Nipululu the 'pale' having come to BuKings 'from the north'.² But the Kings priests know nothing of the 'rocky shore' or northern origin; and if we take the direction in which the corpse faces when buried (the most certain criterion of the direction of origin) then the Nyakusa and Nyondo people came from BuKings, went travelling to the north of Ruqwa volcano and came to the south, and the Kings themselves came from the east.

Other evidence also indicates that the chiefs came from the east or north-east rather than the north-west. The cattle they brought were the short-horned Zebu type, like those of the Maasi and other peoples of central and eastern Tanganyika and Kenya. They are quite different from the long-horned cattle of the Hima

² Geoffrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Nyasa, Southern Livingstone Papers No. 2*, p. 10 (1922). According to the Nyondo version, Nipululu was the first ancestor, but Numbi began the genealogy four generations earlier (see above, p. 2).

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

13

and Toti who established conquest states to the north-west.¹

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were important in Nyakyusa and Ngondo history because their groups became centers of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their associated heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their bellies:

The commoners whom Lwanda found here were extraordinary. They were civilized, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwanda, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are eve-impiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not eve-impiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners humiliated the chief with their fets—yes, by daylight. And if the chief cut a man's because that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fished Mwaipopo (124 whose chieftainship Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not eve-impiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and eve.

¹ Cf. H. H. Gurney and R. W. Thompson, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Outstanding Journal of Farming Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1926 (Government Printer, Freetown). An analysis of the distribution and significance of breeds in Africa.

H. B. Thompson and R. S. Hunt, *Cattle* (1925), pp. 135 ff.

Falldén, *op. cit.*, pl. 65: 65.

M. Meier, *Die Maasi*, pp. 172 ff., 1924, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Nyakyusa Pastoralists*, 1924, pp. 86, 103 (early photographs of Nyakyusa cattle).

The above form type predominance among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an introduction with Ngoni or Ndebele. The hump is regarded as a great deficiency and is suggested in the clay cattle which have been made. Cf. Falldén, *op. cit.*, pl. 70. The distinction between the actual and mythical of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Sauter is marked. J. Sauter, *Die Ganda*, 1924.

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
 773 also is their dependence on *lush* cultivation and herding, and it
 [643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
 [533] as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
 the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
 today is less than half the human population, and men tradition-
 ally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
 593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
 561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
 773 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
 [769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The
 tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior.
 Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority
 there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother.
 The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of com-
 moners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and
 seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
 773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
 561 is a quite separate myth¹ which tells of a chief who looked on his
 621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
 606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a
 father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
 173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
 773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
 372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the
 Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw.
 She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to
 her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
 [415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
 [768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband,
 while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the
 myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence
 of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
 773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
 562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of
 Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

¹ cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

15

are remembered, and the names of the two senior wives of a chief are often recited in genealogies because the heirs take their names from their mothers, but she-who-taught-cooking is the only heroine in her own right. 173
271
[22]

It is worth noting also that the rituals of kinship are linked neither with the heroic tradition nor with primordial incest. We could trace no myths regarding their beginning, save that concerning the origin of avoidance between father and daughter-in-law. The myth of the origin of death is a variation on the theme, so familiar in Bantu-speaking Africa, of the two messengers (a sheep and a dog in this version) sent to men by 'Kyalé', one promising life, the other death. It provides no charter for the ritual.

And what of the relation between myth and history? The conquest of cultivators by cattle-keepers is the common theme of traditions in the lacustrine area, and it is quite possible that small groups of invaders, who brought with them iron tools and weapons and cattle, established themselves as chiefs over small unorganized groups of hunters and cultivators in an isolated valley three or four centuries ago.¹ The Nyakyusa valley and the plain of Ngondo have no iron ore, and the inhabitants were dependent, until the coming of the Europeans, on iron (sijele) smelted in the hills to the east for weapons and tools.² The original inhabitants are said to have used wooden hoes exclusively—such hoes were still in common use in 1958³—so the myth of a Lwembe sending to BuKinga for iron hoes has a firm foundation in historical fact. But that the original inhabitants of the valley did not know the use of fire 300 or 400 years ago (when Lwembe arrived) is incredible. Here the record of one of the greatest events in history is fitted into the shallow time-scale of an isolated people. To them it is not *when* fire arrived that is really important, but *who* brought it; chiefs are chiefs to the Nyakyusa (as to other peoples in Africa) by virtue of this great benefit they brought to men. [m]
[m]

¹ Namwanga tradition (recorded in the Mfaya District Book) tells of the introduction of iron from generations ago. The Banga tradition says that a tall, pale man from 'Smallland' first brought iron spear-heads to Bulungu and his son established a hegemony by virtue of his superior weapons.

² cf. Monica Wilson, *Cash Company*, p. 7. The iron deposits on the Livingstonia mountains have recently been investigated by the Colonial Development Corporation. A 'titaniferous iron mountain' in the south of Njombe District was found to be 'smallish'. *Tanganyika: Annual Reports of the Provincial Commissioners, 1951*, p. 51. [195]

³ Wilson, *op. cit.*, plate VII.

(73) It is surprising to westerners, whose whole framework of reference is shaped by the conception of historical time, that the heroic myth is not more explicitly dated by the volcanic eruptions known to have taken place near Lobaga,¹ but to the Nyakya the sequence of events does not appear important except in so far as it determines ancestry.

(77) Nowadays, with the changing face of the society, there develops a new mythology. Kyaia is described by younger men as a creature, apart and distinct from any hero or ancestor, and they reject any suggestion that he was once on a footing with Lumbe and Kyungu. The more conservative in Christian names lose the heroic myth. One version goes as follows:

Kyaia had two sons, Kyaia the elder who was Mlani or Senani, and Kyaia the younger who was Jona. Kyaia the younger made men, and cattle, and fire, and cooked men, and men ate; then Mlani or Senani was furious because his younger brother was cooking him, and killed him, and became the only one.

Here the traditional theme of the jealousy of the son-in-law is dominant, but generally it is the power of the house over society, under the old dispensation, that is covered.

(77) Many people tell today of old prophecies concerning the coming of Europeans and of the triumph of a new religion. To the Christians these provide some bridge between the past and the present, for they interpret the words of pagan prophets as evidence of their foreknowledge of a truth they had not yet been taught.

(77) ¹ E. A. Harkin, 'The Southern Luvu Plain, Kirjo, Ruenge District', *Templeton Notes and Records*, September 1935, suggests that the most recent eruption is the disaster, that of Kirjo, which place alone often, but this conclusion is based on the description of the eruption by no man, and the statement that his great grandfather witnessed it. Then some accounts of Antelope Kajigisi witnessed the eruption is likely, but had it taken place only three generations ago it might be expected that other families also would have had a tradition of the event. Kirjo is clearly visible from Mwangi's country and had the eruption taken place early in the nineteenth century either the chief Mwangi (25) or his father Mwangi (25) must have observed it. Their descendants are emphatic that there is no tradition of their having done so, though it is commonly known that an eruption of Kirjo occurred in the distant past.

THE 'DIVINE KING'

19

area, the Penja, have a grove, Lukata, where they worship their founding ancestor, and the Njika living on the west bank of the Kiara river have their grove, Lufaga, twenty miles or more from the Lufaga in Salpa and unconnected with it. A third distinct group, the Saka, who were the first inhabitants of the south-eastern part of Kasanga District, have their own grove, Nkono, where their progenitors Mawamakula and Mawilakings were buried. None of these has anything like the prestige and sanctity of the Luemba or the Kyunga, but they are probably the prototypes from which the 'divine kings' developed.

What circumstances produced a 'divine king' at Lufaga and not (so far as our limited knowledge goes) at Kabale we do not know, but we can show how the 'divine kingship' at Mbande, near the Lake shore, developed rather differently from the originally similar institution at Lufaga which is forty miles from the Lake. The Kyunga gradually acquired political power in a way in which the Luemba did not. Among the Nyakyusa the 'sons of Luemba' spread through the country establishing themselves as independent chiefs. They acknowledged the mystical supremacy of the Luemba, and sent cattle to him to sacrifice, but they were sovereigns in their own territories. Just what this mystical supremacy of Luemba implied was and still is often a matter of dispute, as we shall see. On the death of a chief his country was normally divided into two independent sections, each ruled by one of his sons. One heir sometimes fought the other and reduced him to a subordinate position, but the number of independent chiefdoms appears to have increased fairly steadily, and their size did not diminish in proportion, for the Nyakyusa chiefs have been expanding their area of occupation over a long period, establishing themselves as rulers over scattered and unorganized peoples with less developed techniques than their own, or colonizing unoccupied forest country. Expansion into uncultivated forest is still going on (1935), and were it not for the vigilance of the British Administration it is almost certain that the Hadza people would have been conquered and absorbed like the Penja, Logulu, and others before them.¹ In 1936 over 100 independent chiefdoms were recognized by the people themselves, and they varied in size from 100 to 3,000 adult men.

In Ngunda the development was different. In the early period all the sons of the Kyunga, save two, were killed, and the territorial

¹ cf. Monica Wilson, *East Congo*, p. 4.

(177) others were out of the royal blood but 'natives' (indigenous),
 (645) descendants of the first landing men who had arrived with the
 Kpanga, of those he found already occupying the country, and of
 those who joined after him. Later the daughters of the Kpanga's
 (694) were married, and as they grew up they were established as author-
 itaries which through his activities, gradually taking more power
 from the commoners who had previously ruled, by a process
 familiar in other parts of Africa.¹ But the 'natives' retained
 considerable power. At Lufanga the descendants of the two
 men who had arrived with the first Lwanda, and of some of those
 who were there before him, became princes, and princes only, in
 Ngando those of similar origin developed secular, as well as ritual,
 functions.

The reasons why the office of Kpanga developed into a perma-
 nent chieftainship, and that of the Lwanda did not, have been
 examined in a previous publication,² and may therefore be
 dealt with very briefly here. The most important factor was that
 (493) the Kpanga acquired ivory and amassed wealth which was used
 (556) to bind territorial values to him, while the Lwanda remained cut
 off from the outside world and did not trade at all. The geo-
 graphical situation largely accounts for this. The ivory of Ngando
 first went north, and later north-east, across the Lake, and
 Mbande was well situated for both routes. It lies eight miles
 from the Lake and close to a delta which leads from the lake-
 shore plain to an open table-land overlooking north to Lake
 Tanganyika, the very route which caravans have followed for the
 Swahili trade. Lufanga, on the other hand, is forty miles from the
 Lake and the only routes northward lay over broken country and
 passed through high. Girard remarks in his journal that the
 Nyabysa were the only people he had come across among whom
 the chief did not claim at least one tusk of every elephant killed;³
 they did not claim it, for they had no use for the ivory; but the
 Kpanga's right to a tusk from every elephant killed was enforced.

The growth of a permanent chieftainship in Ngando was slow.
 The early Kpanga lived within an enclosure on Mbande to which
 only their personal servants and the nobles of Ngando had

[113] ¹ cf. M. Huxton, *Swahili in Context*, p. 36; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*,
 pp. 12-13; I. Schapery, in *African Political Systems* (edited F. Leach and E. Leach),
 pp. 10-1.

² Geoffrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngando, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 2*
 (1938).

³ V. Girard, *Le Lac d'Afrique Equatoriale* (Lep.), p. 106.

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

81

ance. It was the nobles who were the effective rulers of the country; the divine Kyungu was the centre, a source of mystical power, a numinous symbol of unity, but not a judge or an administrator. Gradually, however, the Kyungus emerged from seclusion; they descended from the hill of Mbanda; later they came to live within a stockade; in the crisis of the Nguni invasion the Kyungu in office (a notable warrior before his accession to the stool) broke tradition by himself taking arms. 'When the Nguni came their enmity was like that of the lions and their number like that of the ants, and so Kyungu Mwakunungula, seeing his people were terrified, took up arms in person, and said he would die fighting. And his people heard with awe and conviction that he himself had come to fight and they determined to die with him.' The next stage was a development of the judicial functions of the Kyungu until, in the present generation, the transformation from god to magistrate was complete.¹

We turn now to the detailed description of the rituals at each station.

(6) LUBAGA

Lubaga is a hill dominating the central part of the Nyakyusa valley and on its slopes are signs of old and intensive cultivation. There on early Luembe (19) lived and was buried, there is the grove where he is worshipped, and there his descendant chosen as 'the living Luembe' should build. According to tradition the 'sons of Luembe' spread all over the Nyakyusa valley as chiefs, but two senior lineages, that of Mwanpondole (27) and that of Mwakibwa (36), remained near Lubaga, and from them was chosen, ultimately, the living embodiment of the 'divine king', the Luembe. Men feared greatly to be chosen, for they feared to be 'killed by the grove', and indeed the Luembe rarely lived long. He must not fall ill or all the people of the country would do so likewise; therefore if he ailed he was smothered by his priests who stuffed up his nostrils and other passages of his body. Towards the end of our stay in BuNyakyusa Kasitile made a formal statement on this point in the presence of another priest, Mwamukunda:

The Luembes were not sick. They said: 'I am going, I have eaten food at home, at the place of the shade', and they died that day; they

¹ The change in the position of the Kyungu from the earliest period is discussed in detail by Geoffrey Wilson in *The Constitution of Ngondo*.

9: Wilson

• 173

643

FN17 Ngonde

Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Chiefs of
Kukwe's Line." (Facing p. 27)

A	B	C
D	E	F

9; Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

F3117 Ngondi F3117

Nyakyusa

173
643

1. Kungu
2. Kungu
3. Kungu

4. Kungu (lost at Kungu)

5. Kungu (lost at Kungu)

6. Kungu (lost at Kungu)

7. Kungu (lost at Kungu)
(Kungu lost to
Kungu when lost)

8. Kungu

9. Kungu
(Kungu)

10. Kungu
(lost at Kungu)

11. Kungu
Kungu lost to
Kungu when a young
man

12. Kungu

13. Kungu

[facing p. 27; section A]

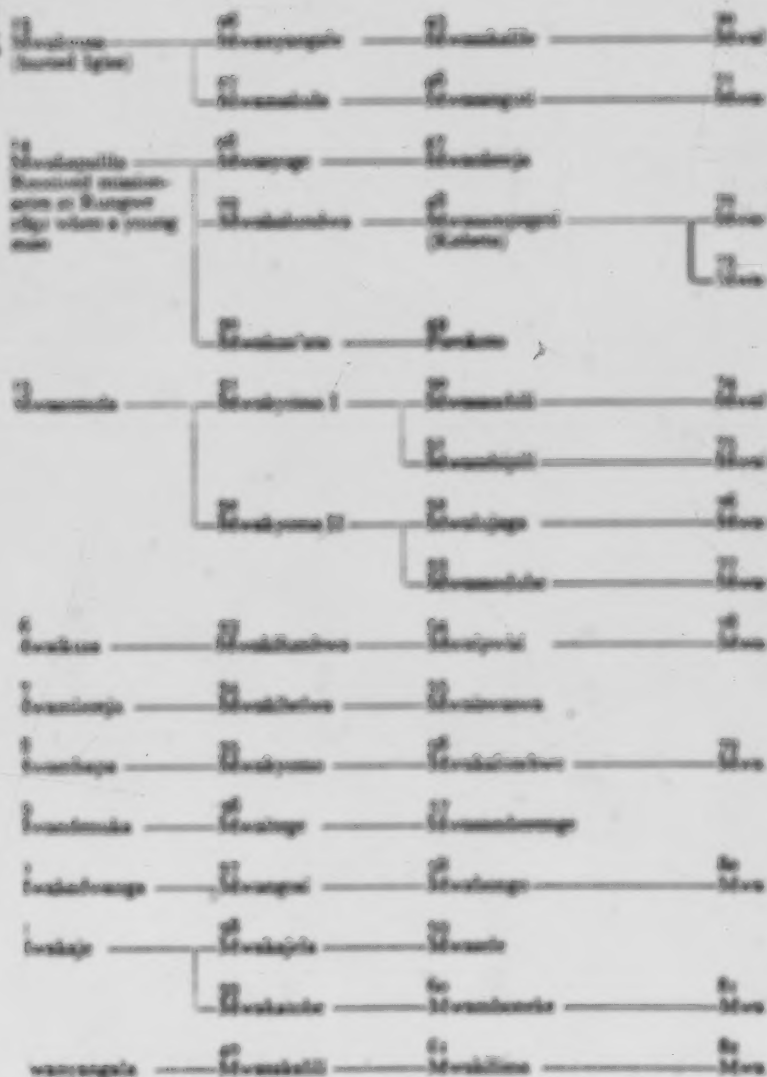
1. *Author's name*
 2. *Title of the paper*
 3. *Journal name*
 4. *Volume and page numbers*
 5. *Year of publication*

—	G_1 Mwachungu	—	G_2 Mchale		C 30
	G_2 Mwachungu I (Kushimani)	—	G_4 Mwachungu		C 31
	G_3 Mwachungu II (Kushimani)	—	G_5 Mwachungu (Mwamoni) (Jirid Mungu)	—	F^1 Juma F^2 Juma
—	G_1 Mwachungu	—	G_2 Mwachungu (name not given)		C 32
	G_2 Mwachungu	—	G_3 Mwachungu	—	G_4 Mwachungu
	G_1 Mwachungu	—	G_2 Mwachungu	—	G_3 Mwachungu
	G_2 Mwachungu	—	G_3 Mwachungu	—	G_4 Mwachungu
—	G_1 Mwachungu	—	F^1 Mwachungu		C 33
—	G_2 Mwachungu	—	F^2 Mwachungu		C 34
—	G_3 Mwachungu	—	F^3 Mwachungu		C 35
—	G_4 Mwachungu	—	F^4 Mwachungu		C 36
—	G_5 Mwachungu	—	F^5 Mwachungu		C 37
—	G_6 Mwachungu	—	F^6 Mwachungu		C 38
—	G_7 Mwachungu	—	F^7 Mwachungu		C 39
—	G_8 Mwachungu	—	F^8 Mwachungu		C 40
—	G_9 Mwachungu	—	F^9 Mwachungu		C 41
—	G_{10} Mwachungu	—	F^{10} Mwachungu		C 42
—	G_{11} Mwachungu	—	F^{11} Mwachungu		C 43
—	G_{12} Mwachungu	—	F^{12} Mwachungu		C 44
—	G_{13} Mwachungu	—	F^{13} Mwachungu		C 45

[Facing p. 27; section C]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

F2017 Ngunda F2017
Nyakyusa



Dr. John Mwalimu (JH) and Mr. Ernest Kyungu, both of whom had made a record. I have not personally checked this genealogy with a member of each line.

[Facing p. 27; section E]

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_____	_____	_____	C8
_____	_____	_____	C9
_____	_____	_____	C10
_____	_____	_____	C11
_____	_____	_____	C12
_____	_____	_____	C13
_____	_____	_____	C14
_____	_____	_____	C15
_____	_____	_____	C16
_____	_____	_____	C17
_____	_____	_____	C18
_____	_____	_____	C19
_____	_____	_____	C20
_____	_____	_____	C21
_____	_____	_____	C22
_____	_____	_____	C23
_____	_____	_____	C24
_____	_____	_____	C25
_____	_____	_____	C26
_____	_____	_____	C27
_____	_____	_____	C28
_____	_____	_____	C29
_____	_____	_____	C30
_____	_____	_____	C31
_____	_____	_____	C32
_____	_____	_____	C33
_____	_____	_____	C34

Ann had made a special study of the subject. They were not in complete agreement and number of each line.

[Facing p.27; section F]

FM17 Nyanda FM17
Nyakyaan

THE "DIVINE KING"

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Kyala has no living representative—in the myth he had no descendants—but only a priest. However, the priest is sometimes referred to as 'Kyala' as were the early missionaries who preached about Kyala.¹ The present priest (1958) is a young man who, by his own account, would be a Christian were it not for his public responsibility in providing food for the country. His grandfather, Mwakinyama, was a Kis who came as an immigrant doctor from Nakajale in Kis country to the north, and was the first of his family to hold office at PaliKyala. Before that the chiefs of the line of Mwanyama themselves collected the ritual. According to Mwanyama's descendants, the present chief Mwanyama, "He planted food and the crops failed, but when 'the owner of food' (Mwakinyama) came with many medicines it grew, there was much food in the house, hence we said: 'Kyala has indeed loved this man, let us give him the duty of sacrificing', so the chiefs gave him cattle of his own and said: 'Let the ritual come out of our bodies and go to Mwakinyama.'" It was Mwakinyama who (according to his grandson) introduced a variety of crops—bananas, maize, cowpeas and groundnuts—to the people of Hamar; before that they grew only bananas and *nyanda*,² so the myth of the hero who brought benefits is linked to the new line of priests. But there is no tradition that the priest of Mwanyama's line was once a 'divine king' like the Lomaha and the Kyanga.

Those who sacrifice at PaliKyala are the local chiefs (descendants of Mwanyama), the Kings (chief Mwakinyama and Kyala (to whom Mwanyama was related), and various chiefs of the Nyakyaan plain as far west as Mwandi (1957) near Mwoyo. The Kings perform using bananas, beer, honey, sheep, and occasionally goats or cattle; the local people offer white fowls, flour, cattle, and, traditionally, peas, which are produced in quantity near by, and which were being sold at the market at Hamar when the Europeans first arrived in the country.³ The Nyakyaan of the plain send black (or black and white) cattle and sheep. According to the Kings priests they themselves offer black animals in Nakajale when they want rain—black clouds—and white animals when they want sun and a clear sky. At Luhaga only dark animals are offered, but at PaliKyala white fowls and black, or white (or

¹ F. Pallmann, *The Districts of Nyasa and Southern Rhodesia*, p. 327.

² *Nyanda*—maize in Portuguese, but here it is associated with *nyanda* (maize).

³ Joseph Thomson, *To the Great African Lakes and Back* (1885), v. 1, pp. 404-5.

The missionary, Dr. A. Marmaly, saw hatters and choppers, as well as peas, on the flow of the river. F. Pallmann, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

89

and say it because this food is sanctified to their fellow-men. Those who are not men of Niganda do not drink the sanctified beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A kind cow is used in the grove because groves are always fruitful and therefore full of something important to them. So it is said that the thickness of the cow denotes the fecundity (abundance) of the grove.

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Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kabale chiefs sent offerings to the Baliganda, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

My grandfather passed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of an Baliganda; we were owners of the soil, the Kabale chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pay them they went with an oxen or even of bananas, and sweet milk, and oxen meat, and small sweet potatoes; then they passed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the oxen of bananas had ripened, the milk had thickened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was oxen had ripened. Then they said Kyaia [that is Kyaia and the district] had died by us. . . . We spoke of Kyaia even before the Europeans had come. . . .¹

They say that very long ago on Baliganda, we men of Kanyanda, had not yet got fire, the chief brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'vomiting out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chief came and built, and when others came the firstmen fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hunting.

(173) •

(c) ANCESTRAL CHIEFS

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the horses and at the groves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice probably ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kasilile (86) said one day:

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Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwamunda (116) never thinks of the rituals now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwamunda and told him to tell his

¹ According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to Athanda but the same passage refers to Athanda as Ede meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were equated by Kabale informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité du Peuple*, 1896.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Farrow for drawing my attention to this valuable Journal.

CHAPTER VI

LAND AND POWER

643 The crux of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power
 644 and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual
 645 cycle to discuss the relation between chieftdoms and villages and
 the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power
 between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF
 CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

73 Tradition makes it clear that the houses came to a sparsely
 341 occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread
 out as their numbers increased. The seniors chose to live on
 hillsides overlooking the surrounding country. Lohaga and
 Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites.
 101 The grove of Kahala, where the ancestors of the Kakwa chiefs
 176 first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the
 plateau, and Kambocheria (near the Mbanda bridge) on which the
 early chiefs Mwalipapa (81) and Mwalipapa (86) were buried is a
 hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

961 Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference
 for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bananae and the
 124 oil-bearing *ayungali* trees (*Trichilia app.*)¹ as well as the great
amwali (*Chaptalia amala*) which, in their view, adds dignity to
 the homestead.² A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out'
 and the sacred groves in Mwalipapa's chieftdom (C 24)³ shows that
 for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwalipapa
 81) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a
 mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of
 Mwalisambwe (30) have lived within two or three miles of one
 another (*side plan*, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

¹ I am indebted to Mr. P. R. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tokope, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

² cf. Monica Wilson, *God Company*, pp. 77-8.

³ C followed by a number is the reference number of a chieftdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

LAND AND POWER

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Section. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujaga, Igembe, and Lupondo, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (see plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and interspersed with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements reflected in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwakongo (85), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwakijongo (86). The son of this leviratal union, Mwakipende (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwakijongo's heir, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakabule (117). Mwakipende inherited Kibonde and Mwakabule inherited Kituli, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipende's heir, Likonyela, and Mwakabule remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule. [77] [63] [602]

and Mwakiteja, son of Mwakijongo II (younger full brother of 86) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabula was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independent. [77] [63] [643]

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujaga and Lupondo, with Mwan- [77] [63] [661]

kuga (150) and Mwaacha (152) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

643 Nyakyusa, when sacrifices are continued in the grove of a dead chief
 561 such as Mwakisambwe (30), for an indefinite number of genera-
 796 tions, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his
 [169] priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the
 [793] priests of Lubaga held perpetual titles of this sort. The conception
 of the *corporation sole* is familiar enough in the western tradition,
 but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by
 the use of a personal name and the almost complete identifica-
 tion of each holder with his predecessors, as well as by the
 practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were
 offices.

52d Generation was determined among the Nyakyusa by associa-
 796 tion with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out'
 173 together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the
 634 ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a
 [611] whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the
 heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I
 (115) and Mwankuga I (130). If a chief had no male heir of the
 right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an
 heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga,
 it was a *girl* Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the
 ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (115).
 When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he assumed office, but
 he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a
 further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the
 maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in
 assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The
 period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-
 five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly
 correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the tim-
 ing of the 'coming out' to account for the differences in the
 number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the
 lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is
 possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a
 generation has been omitted between Mwakapeje (54) and
 Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the
 number of generations does not always tally.

643 In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding
 561 that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not
 622 inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his
 status, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

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COMMUNAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYUSA

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[721] north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

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[782] The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He [821] was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

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1973 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields¹ and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the [178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).² The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional 182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining 177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

¹ In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

² But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (30) lived secluded while Mwakilina (31) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

Although this essay is to be primarily concerned with the modern and changing land and population situation among the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, it is quite essential first to have an understanding of the traditional system of political and territorial organisation and of land tenure. This is not mere historicism, for despite changes the traditional system remains as the basis of contemporary land-holding and land law. Whilst actual conditions on the ground change, the Nyakyusa appreciation of those changes and their attitudes to land lag significantly behind. In brief, the traditional system was geared to a situation where there was plenty of land. Today the people find real difficulty in adjusting themselves to a high density of population and an acute shortage of land, with the result that this new situation is aggravated by outmoded practices, attitudes and cultural values. 121

The ancestors of the present group of peoples now known collectively as the Nyakyusa, moved into the Rungwe region from the Ukinga Highlands to the east beyond the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains. According to legend, which is probably substantially true, these newcomers found a sparsely populated country which they easily occupied. Later, following internecine strife, one group under a man called Mwakyusa left the Masoko area in the centre of present-day Rungwe District and moved down into the Lake Plains. There, probably less than 150 years ago, they drove out the Ngonde people and settled. The sons of Mwakyusa took their shares of the country and people and established their independent chiefdoms. The chiefs in 1956 are the lineal descendants, mainly in the fifth generation, of Mwakyusa, and have a well-known genealogy. The only exception to this occurs amongst the group of tiny chiefdoms in the extreme east under the Livingstones, which now form a single administrative chiefdom under Mwakilasa and number some 400 men. They trace descent from pre-Nyakyusa settlers known as the Saku. 173

Traditionally, as today, the village was the basic unit both in social life generally and in land-holding in particular. The Nyakyusa village was possibly unique in Africa. It was comprised of men of roughly the same age, together with their wives and young children, and it excluded their fathers and sons and also, very often, their elder and younger brothers. Each village consisted of a close group of houses (often centred on a broad "village street"), with arable and pastoral land around it. Each village had fairly well-defined boundaries with its neighbours. The village was represented as a group and acted corporately through its headman, *lifumu*, who was the guardian of villagers' land rights, the arbiter in land problems and disputes, and the controller of unused land. He was also the political and ritual leader of the village, but nevertheless he was a commoner chosen from amongst the villagers themselves, and was not a member of a chiefly lineage. 621, 561, 361, 622

Land was owned by the village as a group. Every man resident in the village had a clear right to a site for his house and banana plot and to arable land within the village boundaries; he also had a right to graze his cattle in its communal pastures. Residence gave these rights and members of other villages were excluded. A man who left the village automatically gave up these rights, though if he returned he was able to take up his former holding or its equivalent. 423

[P.236A]

**WANYAKYUSA
AGRICULTURE**By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural
Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

- 131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

- 101 The local people are not indigeneous to this area. They came, tradition has it, from Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wabenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935 census the total population was 153,204. The total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.
- 181 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.
- 105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
- 342 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.
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Climate

- 132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,